Letters from Europe:
Martin Simecka on Slovakia, Franco Ferrarotti on Italy

1998

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Education and Integration: Europe and America

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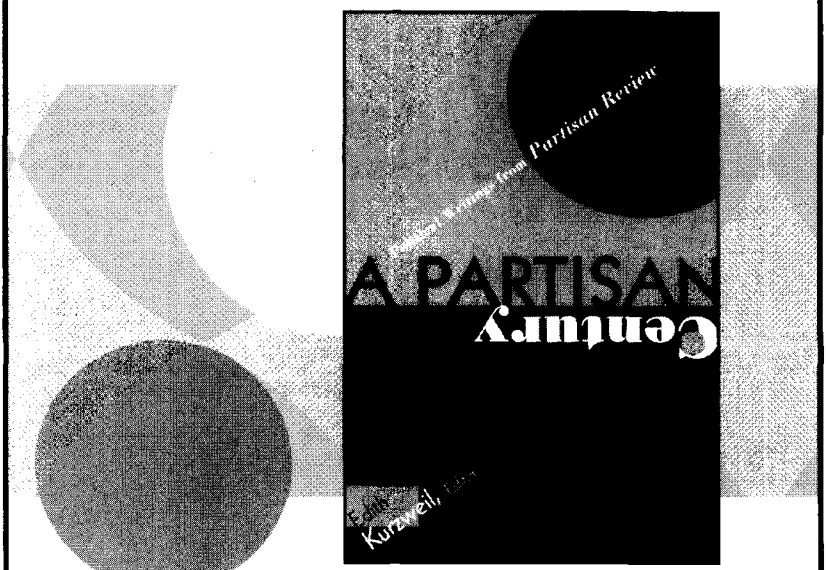

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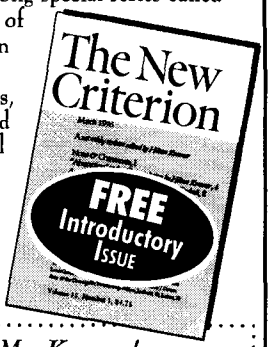

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MARTIN SIMECKA

The Importance of Reading Maps

It is important to know how to read maps. The sense of geography tends to be unreliable, and particularly so in Central Europe. When the Slovak politicians succeeded in detaching Slovakia from the Czech Republic in 1992, they celebrated their dubious victory on a hill, which, they proclaimed, was the geographical center of Europe. Nobody knows how they found this place, or how they determined the borders of Europe. I know of at least two other countries who claim that the geographical center lies on their territory: Lithuania and Belarus.

However, it is clear that with its political orientation, Slovakia is increasingly acquiring more Eastern features and moving away from Central Europe towards Russia. This is an enormous paradox, as one can clearly see on the map. Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia, situated a few dozen miles from Vienna, lies geographically much further west than either Warsaw or Budapest. Also, without any doubt, Slovakia belongs to the West historically and spiritually. For a thousand years it was part of first the Hungarian and then the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, just like today's Hungary or the Czech Republic. It is bound to the West by its traditional Catholicism, which looks to Rome. The eastern borders of Slovakia are identical with the borders of Western Christianity. Behind them rules the Orthodox Church.

It seems, however, that in Slovakia neither tradition nor geography matters these days. When, in 1989, the Communist regime fell, Czechoslovakia still existed and huge demonstrations against the regime were going on also in Prague and Bratislava. There, at the same time, we heard words about a just and democratic system as well as about the federation of two republics in one state. The desire for justice assumed a strange guise and gradually turned into a mask of hate. The voters got rid of those who maintained the original idea of democracy and federation and in their places installed former Communists with nationalist rhetoric. Soon thereafter Czechoslovakia broke up, since there was no will among politicians to keep it going. Then Slovakia was not very different from the other states that appeared at the beginning of the 1990s in Central and Eastern Europe. But it had three features atypical of the group. In distinction to the others, it already had three years of thorough democratic and economic reform during the existence of Czechoslovakia. Secondly, it originated without a referendum, which, if implemented, would prevent

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independence, and thirdly, it was the only state that detached itself from its partner in the direction of the East. A map would clearly show that all the states of the former Soviet Union that left the Russian Federation are either in the West or in the South of the former Empire. The case of the former Yugoslavia was similar, when the individual states left Serbia. Slovakia is a country that no one understands, including Slovaks themselves. The origins of the state are found in those atypical features, which are the reason for arguments within the country that will take a long time to resolve.

On midnight of New Year's Eve, 1992, when the former flag of Czechoslovakia was lowered and the new Slovak flag was raised, Federal Television signed off as well, after broadcasting for decades in Czech and Slovak, two similar languages. Those who feared that the borders between the two states would become more and more impenetrable and the two nations would, after living together for almost a century, become more distant from each other, were right. After five years, the Czech Republic became a part of Western Europe and is entering NATO, while Slovakia is distancing itself from the rest of Europe, undergoing a grave crisis of identity.

At first sight, the visitor will not notice it. Bratislava, the capital, looks increasingly better. The old town center with its historic buildings has been almost completely renovated. In the summer, the squares and streets of the pedestrian zone are covered with coffee tables and the atmosphere of the city acquires a southern flavor, similar to Budapest or Vienna. The owner of the Irish Pub, who owns a number of such pubs in Central Europe, makes his home in Bratislava, claiming that he feels best right here. It is also where he has the biggest turnover.

A mountainous country with thick forests in the North and East, with plentiful wildlife, including bears and wolves, Slovakia seems almost untouched by civilization—although on top of the hills there are hundreds of ruins of medieval castles. Tourists seldom come here, because Slovakia has almost no freeways. And foreigners navigate the impenetrable network of roads with difficulty. Slovaks claim that they are an especially cordial and good-natured people. This may be true, but most of them do not speak any foreign language and do not understand that tourism follows the same laws of business as any other business. Nevertheless, a courageous tourist who enjoys overcoming banal obstacles would be pleasantly surprised by the high standard of civilization in villages and towns that do not differ from other European ones.

Slovakia's problem is not one of poverty, or the inablility to organize itself, or its relations with its neighbors. Rather, it is a psychological problem of consciousness. The Slovaks themselves cultivate the myth that they have been oppressed by the Magyars for a millennium. First the Magyars,

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then the Czechs prevented them from acquiring a normal relationship to their state. Such a relationship might have enabled them to build up generations of political elites in the nineteeenth century and to mature as a political nation together with other European nations. This new state had to appear to accelerate the process, so Slovaks could enter the twenty-first century without any handicap. The myth is predicated on the idea of the linear development of nations and the belief that the nation state is the foundation of human happiness. In the hierarchy of values, according to this myth, the individual and his right to happiness are not paramount. It is the nation state that automatically makes an individual happy by its very existence. Concomitant to this idea is the conclusion that the state does not necessarily have to be democratic, since democracy and excessive freedom might threaten the power of the state.

After five years of existence, it is clear that the politicians who founded the state and are still in power have concluded that democracy threatens not only their personal power, but also the existence of the state itself.

This evolution occurred right before my eyes, as if the players were following a handbook on the establishment of a dictatorship. Vladimir Meciar, a key figure in Slovak politics of the 1990s, began as a former Communist who had nothing to do with the revolution of November 1989, but who, a month later, understood that the system had collapsed and that the new situation offered opportunities to anyone. The circumstances of his arrival on the political stage are bizarre. He became minister of the interior on the basis of a competition organized by the erstwhile revolutionaries. He stunned everyone with his ability to think systematically and with his rhetorical talents. Soon he became prime minister. The desperate politicians who discovered yet another of his unusual characteristics recalled him as a pathological liar who also had a phenomenal memory which he used in demagogic attacks against his enemies. But he soon became the most popular politician in Slovakia, a mythical hero who would bring his nation happiness and prosperity. At first, Meciar still believed in democracy, because a majority of voters returned him twice to his prime ministerial seat. When he was dividing Czechoslovakia, together with the then prime minister of the Czech Republic, Mr. Vaclav Klaus, he even bequeathed to Slovakia a constitution which, with its many faults, nevertheless is a democratic constitution. Today, five years later, he realizes that democracy is a threat to him, because he is hated by the majority of Slovaks. The citizens took a long time, but they finally understood what democratic politicians saw a long time ago: that his unusual personal characteristics mask a great danger for them. Now, some consider him to be mentally ill, an amoral person of great intellect; others see him as an evil demon. This knowledge came too late, since the time when Meciar could

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have been defeated by democratic means is over, and Meciar himself stopped believing in democracy.

During the last four years this former Communist has managed to give away almost all the factories originally belonging to the state to his faithful followers. In other countries this was termed "privatization." In Slovakia, however, it amounted to robbery. Most of the businesses were sold for a symbolic sum that the new owners could easily pay from the profits they generated. The circle surrounding Meciar thus acquired the kind of wealth that remains unimaginable for the majority of ordinary Slovak citizens. The number of these new owners and their families runs only to a few dozen, perhaps, but they control the majority of the country's economy.

At the same time, Meciar built a solid governmental administrative structure, staffed exclusively by his own people. He cleansed the police of all those whose loyalty he doubted and rebuilt the secret police, rehiring former Communist state security officers. He managed to do all this because he enjoys a majority in the parliament and the political opposition was stripped of all controlling functions. His big rival until March 1998 was the president, Michal Kovac, originally his partner, who gradually turned into a rival. As president, Kovac did not enjoy as much power, but he made an attempt to defend the democratic institutions against Meciar's onslaught. Kovac's term expired this year and Slovakia is now without a president; those functions and powers have passed on to Meciar.

The only rival Meciar could not defeat was the media. Despite the fact that the state television and radio are under his total control, and the political reporting there does not look any different than under the Communists, there exists a network of private radio stations, several big dailies, and one commercial television station, all independent of Meciar and very critical of him. This distinguishes Slovakia from the classical authoritarian regimes that rule in Croatia, Serbia, and Belarus.

The story of Slovak journalists is instructive. At the beginning of the nineties, it was the journalists who made Meciar into the hero and the national savior. That was when they discovered free speech and their power. They persuaded the Slovak population that the intellectual revolutionaries of November 1989 did not understand their nation or its desires. When Meciar reclaimed his power with their help and started to limit freedom of speech, the same journalists turned against him. Since then a dramatic contest has been going on between the media and the government, so far without a winner.

The society developed in line with the journalists and today is deeply divided. Meciar still boasts fanatical supporters, but most of the population hates him just as fanatically. Elections are to be held this September. All the

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polls suggest that Meciar will not gather more than a third of the votes and that the democratic opposition will draw more than half of the votes. Nevertheless, the majority of the population does not believe that elections will be free and democratic. They have too much experience with Vladimir Meciar. Many of them believe that he was involved in the still-unsolved case of the kidnapping of the president's son three years ago. They believe that the key witness to the kidnapping was killed on his orders, that he is in direct contact with the Mafia, or even that he is its chief.

This situation is the price for the founding of the independent state. Today it is quite clear that it happened mainly because Meciar desired absolute power which he could not attain in a joint state with the Czechs. Slovaks, including those who now hate him, allowed him to proceed because they believed the myth of the nation-state as a guarantor of their personal happiness. Today they are unhappy in it and neurotically await the September elections, which, they hope, will free them of the trauma known as Meciar.

It's a sad story. In 1991 and 1992, when I wrote about what this society might expect if it believed in this man, I was called a traitor, an enemy of the nation. Some of my friends with a similar reputation preferred to move to Prague. In the meantime, I predicted everything that came to pass, with one exception. At that time I was certain that Slovakia was evolving into an authoritarian regime, since the society lacked the will to defend democracy. Today, I am not quite so certain about that. But I am quite sure that I will know before the end of this year. I desire nothing more than to find out that I was indeed wrong in 1992.

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FRANCO FERRAROTTI

Letter from Italy

It is important to grasp the permanent undercurrent of a society's meaningless details. Italians live by magic. A doctor in Modena, for instance, is convinced he can beat cancer with a cocktail of his own invention—a potion, easy to take, apparently infallible. Italians rave about it. They have taken to the "piazza" against the Health Ministry that wants to check it. And judges have gotten into the act. They have ordered that the mysterious cocktail be given to whoever wants it: the terminally ill should receive it free of charge. Unfortunately, nobody knows what the effects of the potion are going to be, whether it can actually cure cancer and, eventually, which of the many different forms of cancer. This seems to be of lesser importance. In the meantime, in Rome, in front of the Palazzo Chigi, the headquarters of the national government, a huge demonstration has taken place in favor of the cocktail. Nobody is concerned with establishing its therapeutic value, if any. We are back to the Middle Ages (had we ever left them?) when people organized religious processions against cholera.

Obviously, the present-day situation is different. Yet, Italian culture and most of its reputable representatives go to extremes rather than squarely face a given issue. A sober exploration of the actual situation is considered too prosaic. Everybody claims that the first Republic is dead, but the second one is nowhere in sight. Can a revolution be effected by magistrates, the most conservative technicians of existing norms who want to maintain the status quo indefinately? This is considered a trivial question. The current Italian situation may be the clearest evidence that Nietzsche was right after all: a revolution is the biggest emotion a nation can offer itself. In the case of Italy one should add: it also is the biggest theatrical performance.

In France, youth unemployment turns to tragedy. Why not in Italy? The answer is simple: because in Italy the family acts as a secret shock absorber. Throughout southern Italy, in particular, the family acts as a safety net. The unemployed young man can stay at home with "mamma" and have his meals ready at the right time, his shirts and underwear washed and ironed until he is about thirty-five. If the young man is eager to go to work, he can always enroll with organized crime. Choices are many, almost embarrassing: mafia in Sicily; *ndrangheta* in Calabria; *camorra* in Naples; *sacra corona unita* in Puglia. In the meantime, the best Italian journalists find

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nothing better to do than to explore their navel, that is, their intimate feelings. The recent novel by Eugenio Scalcari is a case in point. *Il labirinto* (Rizzoli, 1998) is the story of a feeling. But one would look in vain for some practical problem of everyday life, such as paying the rent, taking care of a leaking roof, and so on. No, everything centers on the inner feelings of the evanescent protagonists. Society with its boring problems simply does not exist.

In France the autobiographical trend also seems strong. Two eminent social scientists, Jean Duvignaud and Georges Balandier, perhaps feel old enough to look backward, to their past. With a widely different eye, however: poetical and inspiring in the case of Duvignaud; down to earth, Balandier. In his *L'oubli* (Actes Sud, 1996), Duvignaud offers a vivid account of how a whole generation lost faith in Communism and got away from Marxism. Talking about the meetings in Paris in somebody's obscure apartment of a group of intellectuals who wanted to leave the Parti Communiste Français without becoming *rénégats,* that is without joining the extreme right, Duvignaud depicts a struggle which is neither ideological nor purely intellectual. It is, first of all, moral and highly personal: how to face isolation and even hostility from former friends who have remained in the party; how to turn emargination into a splendid occasion, a real chance for individual creativity. Thus, the bulletin (not review, too pompous!) *Arguments* was born. It did not live too long, but long enough to make a mark. Balandier in his *Conjugaisons* (Fayard, 1997) is more academically oriented. The author of *Éloge du désorire* identifies in his own intellectual itinerary the long way, and all the detours, toward a post-disciplinary approach to social research. Would this mean also an acceptance, on the part of such a self-conscious culture as the French one, of a general multicultural orientation? I don't know. Perhaps it is still too soon to tell.

The problem does not concern France alone. It is said that the force of Europe has been historical in its differences. But the future United Europe has to learn to make differences live together and to understand, at least to tolerate, each other: a new version of the medieval *condordia discors.* It is certainly more easily said than done. The difficulty is real and has nothing or little to do with a literary game: how to make German *Leistung,* French sense of "grandeur," and Italian genius for "improvisation" combine in an untried and perhaps impossible synthesis is enough to make your head spin. It does not seem sufficient to sing the praises of the South of Europe versus the North as Dominique Fernandez recently has done (in D. F., *Le voyage d'Italie—Dictionnaire amoureux*, with photographs by Ferrante Ferranti, Plon, 1998). The Italian character depicted in his research is not new. From Goethe on, as well as from Michel de

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Montaigne, through the *Mornings in Florence* and *The Stones of Venice* by John Ruskin, not to mention *Old Calabria* by Norman Douglas, a trip to Italy as a *Bildungsroman* is almost a commonplace. What is new in Fernandez is the attempt to capture the ambivalence of the Italian character that, in this scene, seems to portray present-day European ambivalence: the charm of the sunshine in Naples and, at the same time, the gloomy but productive Hamburg that is filled with romantic pathos. I do not know whether the "clear pleasure" of Southern European everyday life can be rightly represented by Giacomo Casanova, as Fernandez maintains—some sort of Don Juan in Soren Kierkegaard's sense who stops short of reaching the ethical level and seems quite satisfied with the purely aesthetic enjoyment of the fleeting instant. With all due respect to the fear that a united Europe exclusively concerned with balanced budgets and economic performance might result in the prosaic kingdom of busy and narrow-minded storekeepers, the Europe of tomorrow faces cultural problems that call for political accomodation and go well beyond a purely pragmatic approach.

Sensitive and learned commentators are fully aware of the impact of such issues. The transition from national currency to the euro might be fairly easy for countries such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece. But for Germany it is another story, although the overall dominance of the Bundesbank as the severe financial gatekeeper of Europe might induce many people to think that the "euro" is just another name for the beloved Deutschmark. The situation is more serious for France: the introduction of a common European currency, writes Mary Blume in *The International Herald Tribune* (April 4-5, 1998), "is a nightmare in a country where people still talk in the old francs that ceased to exist in 1958, when much of today's population had not even been born. How will they handle the grim day, June 30, 2002 at the latest, when the franc definitively disappears?"

However, perhaps even more serious problems are facing tomorrow's united Europe. True: Europe will be one of the most prosperous world markets with a population rating rather high in terms of average literacy and general cultural background. But what about extra-community integration? This is bound to grow and Europe cannot fool herself by thinking that she will be able to stand the siege indefinitely. For one thing, demography is against Europe as it is against most developed countries. These countries are economically and technically powerful but demographically weak. They will need manpower to sustain their growth and continued welfare. This means that they will be forced to give in to a certain quota of extra-community immigration. But organizing a multicultural and multi-ethnic society poses an ominous problem. So far, the only advanced multi-ethnic society is the United States. From this point of view, Europe lags behind. Italy is almost exclusively concerned with protecting its coast-

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line, which is eight thousand kilometers long, from Albanians and Kurds—rather than with the various mafias and other types of organized crime at work in Central and Eastern Europe. Naturally, the land of St. Francis of Assisi, who would not deny a kiss to the most destitute homeless, is ready to offer, in Rome, a hot meal to all the poor who care for it. But not much thought has been given to citizenship rights. Actually, the Italian government seems slow in recognizing the reality of Italy as the new El Dorado and as a pole of attraction for immigration. After all, until a couple of generations ago, Italy was one of the world's main exporters of manpower. It takes time to catch up with this unexpected situation. But even countries such as France are slow formulating laws for *immigrés* and *pieds noirs*. A person born in France to immigrant parents does not automatically become a citizen. He has to file an application by the time he reaches eighteen years of age. In Germany the *Ausländergesetz,* or law on the citizenship of foreign persons, aims first of all at a "naturalization" of foreigners after a due period of integration. The stress is on integration. In other words, no allowance is made for foreign cultures. Just like in France with Jean-Marie Le Pen, there is much fear of losing "racial purity." In the recent regional elections in France, the non-racist right wing in several cases joined forces with the extreme right wing of Le Pen. This was explained in terms of pragmatic electoral opportunism. In fact, the attraction was, more or less consciously, racist. Of course, nowadays nobody would accept the gross Nazi racism and, even less, the crude biological racism of Arthur de Gobineau. A new kind of racism, which might be called "differential" or "cultural" racism is being developed. Pierre André Taguieff is perhaps the most vocal representative of this trend. As I have argued in my book *The Temptation to Forget* (Greenwood Press, 1994), this racism is based on a presumption of cultural asymmetry and pretends to be a "cultivated racism." My feeling is that, apart from political alibis and tactical calculation, classical, or biological, racism is not much different from cultivated racism. They mutually reinforce one another. Racist discriminations are always based on a racist mentality. The non-established superiority of northern Europeans and North American culture is insinuated into the debate on the citizenship rights of immigrants. But cultivated racism is more subtle. At the level of debate, the highest respect is paid to cultural differences. However, this respect ends up by embalming the different cultures. All cultures are respected, but each culture should keep its place and avoid any mixture, that is, avoid what de Gobineau most hated, *le mélange*.

Fortunately, not all European social scientists share such views. Even the most tradition-bound sociologists refrain from these extremes. Nobody has forgotten that Max Weber was an ardent nationalist. He worried because "world politics was no longer made in Berlin." But at the

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same time he was a far cry from the arrogant pan-Germanism of a colleague such as Heinrich von Treitschke. Currently four major German social scientists—Horst Baier, M. Rainer Lepsius, Wolfgang Mommsen, and Wolfgang Schluchter—are working on a critical edition of the "Collected Works" of Max Weber. The *Gesamtausgabe* will take several years, but the first volumes are already available. They include the personal correspondence of Weber, including the rich exchanges with his wife, Marianne Weber. Lepsius is in charge of this section of the Weberian *opera omnia* and we learn from him that far from being the stoic hero we have been remembering since his death in 1920, Weber actually was a man filled with existential and intellectual contradictions who, for many years, suffered from mental exhaustion. Especially in the United States, thanks to the effort of Talcott Parsons and Edward Shils, Weber was interpreted as an impassionate analyst, whereas we now know that his attitude as a sociologist was not at all "neutral" or cold-blooded. When he wrote about *Wertfreiheit,* this Tonio Kröger of the social sciences simply meant that nobody was entitled to teach from the chair and speak to the students about his personal principles of preference as if these were scientific propositions, binding for everybody.

This "new image" of Max Weber seems to point the way for some sort of alliance between the south and the north of Europe. A certain amount of participation is essential to the understanding of human problems and does not exclude, *per se*, the critical distance which is required by a fairly objective evaluation.

ALFRED KAZIN
AN EARLY CONTRIBUTOR
1915 - 1998

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Education and Integration: Europe and America

Introduction

Jon Westling: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Jon Westling, president of Boston University. It is my pleasant duty this morning to welcome you to this conference on "Education and Integration." As I am scheduled to impose my own views on you at some length tomorrow morning I shall be uncharacteristically brief. I wish, first, to thank the co-sponsors of this conference, the Austrian Cultural Institute, and *Partisan Review*. *Partisan Review* has been a part of Boston University now for more than twenty years, but it has been a part of the life of the mind in this country and around the world for more than sixty years. Throughout its very distinguished history it has had a commendable record of standing against intellectual and political fashion and for thoughtful and reasonable discussion. We are honored to be in the company of *Partisan Review* in sponsoring this conference.

The connection between what is taught at the elementary and secondary level and what ought to be taught in higher education is increasingly problematic. I started out as a medieval historian. The medieval universities solved this problem by taking on the full duties of education beyond the most elementary level. Students would enter at twelve or fourteen and it was common for them to stay in the pre-modern university for eight or ten years or more. We may be returning to that model, but I hope not. It is also my hope, as I'm sure it is yours, that the understanding and illumination that we are able to glean from the papers we will hear and from the ensuing discussion will help us to set a course to improve the ways in which our educational systems function. Indeed, there can be no more serious subject, and we are honored to be host to so many distinguished and thoughtful commentators. We are also grateful to those of you who have taken time today and tomorrow to help us in these deliberations. Our distinguished guests, and all of you, are very welcome here. Thank you.

Edith Kurzweil: Thank you very much, Jon Westling. I too want to thank all of the people at Boston University who are helping us make this

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conference a success, as well as the Advisory Board of *Partisan Review* and the Austrian Cultural Institute. I will introduce the participants in a little while. To begin with, I should say that I'll be provocative, in order to have us get into the controversies.

As you know, in *New Schools for a New Century* Diane Ravitch and Joseph Vitteriti have excellent chapters on the charter school movement and school choice, on a variety of school reforms and school-based versus centrally based management, on Catholic lessons for private schools, and so on. They introduce their volume by stating that "for the first time in a century, reformers are beginning to think 'outside the box'." At this conference, I expect us to step even further outside. This is why I have brought together educators from other Western countries, to inform us how they are dealing with problems similar to our own; and why I have invited experts on what is going on in K-12 education. For what students learn before entering college—in curricula and study habits—predetermines much of their subsequent education and, by implication, what and how they will do after graduation.

Altogether, I would like us to stay away from rehashing the relatively narrow—though necessary—polemics about the advantages and disadvantages of testing, of vouchers, of affirmative action, of diversity, etc., but nevertheless keep these in mind while searching for better means of exposing American students to, and interesting them in, advanced knowledge and the basics of emerging information. We know, even if they don't, that that is what they will need to get ahead. To that end, we will have to bolster the teaching of mathematics, and must institute minimum standards in every field of study. And we will have to stop advancing kids who can't read at grade level—levels geared to challenging kids rather than boring them—and teach them to use computers rather than have these take the place of thinking.

Basically, I am firmly convinced that the prevailing nostrums, such as the search for self-esteem, for group and personal identity, which tend also to foster insincerity and dishonesty by stressing a relatedness that is often unfelt, are no more than feel-good ideologies. Or boondoggles. Competence rather than hypocritical flattery, I believe, is what bolsters self-esteem.

As you well know, all the by now taken-for-granted and unexamined notions and passing fads may be labeled, and often dismissed, as "politically correct"—without considering their far-reaching consequences. This happens to be the current slogan while "business" is conducted more or less as before. We will have to be on the look-out for strategems not yet invented, be it by politicians, educators, administrators, teachers' organizations, or money managers and efficiency experts. Yes, we all believe in democracy, and in equality—preferably of opportunities rather than

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conditions. However, politicians often use these ideals we share to push their own ends, and are unable to do so outside the existing system. Thomas Sowell has referred to this as "bipartisan baloney." And Chester Finn, from whom you'll hear in a minute, has described the enormity of political and institutional obstacles to meaningful change. We'll hear from him whether—concretely—we are closer to overcoming these hurdles now than we were a few years ago; and from our European participants why the implementation of specific laws may be less costly than they are under our various federal and state legislations. (I don't mean to imply that other countries don't face problems similar to our own.)

On November 21, 1997, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reported that administrators and faculty had trouble hiding their support of students' strikes in Hessen, since they too were upset about the fact that since 1977, for instance, the number of students rose by 80 percent, and the number of professors by only 10 percent; that state support sank by a third between 1975 and 1992; and that money for schooling (German universities are under the auspices of the state) will be cut even further. Dr. Deppe-Wolfinger will tell us about the ramifications of all that, and, I expect, about the allocation of funds.

Over here, we are often led to believe that more money will fix most of the problems of our schools. But can it really help instruct the tenured teachers in K-12 who themselves had inferior educations and are already in the system, or the professors in universities who perpetuate their own narrow training, and/or the political biases they believe they must inculcate?

This is not to say that we don't need adequate funding, but that we must try to get rid of the waste that goes into administering and overseeing such things as affirmative action, special education, and much of the other well-intentioned legislation that has little to do with student learning, but whose implementation by now employs hundreds of thousands, even millions, of citizens who, in turn, form pressure groups and have too much to lose to face squarely what is going on.

In any event, it seems to me inadmissable, for instance, that over half the funds for New York City's public education—the highest in the country—is spent on administration rather than on books and other materials; that teachers' accountability is thought to rise with increases in salaries; that teachers' education often lacks content; that corrupt school boards perpetuate nepotism; that neither teachers nor principals may be fired; and that teachers' organizations are able to prevent meaningful reform—because politicians who could initiate such reforms don't dare tangle with unions strong enough to keep them from being re-elected. Does this mean that we therefore ought to abandon public education, as some argue, and go to some form of managed education, or support a variety of private educational

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ventures with public funds? Or, should we go along with President Clinton when, from the bottom of his heart, he proposes an education agenda in his State of the Union address, and declares that we are entering the year, or the decade, dedicated to our children?

Of course, children, like motherhood and disease control, can make for electoral victories. Improving standards, stepping on the toes of incompetent educators, eliminating wasteful programs—such as bilingual education, which harms more children than it helps—do not. Attacks on entrenched interests are risky at best for a politician's career, and, with the help of the press, usually lead to his defeat.

The days of good public education—from Head Start to college—as the means to upward mobility seem to be gone. In the past, private schools existed to set an example, to offer specialized or religious education, served an elite whose kids had trouble keeping up, or whom they didn't want to expose to the mores and problems of the lower classes. (Not that they would say so out loud.) But, most of all, public schools managed to integrate large numbers of immigrants from diverse backgrounds, to melt most of them into the American pot—rather than foster animosity among ethnic groups, and victimhood, under the banner of a so-called multiculturalism that ends up in ghettoization. I am not advocating excessive patriotism. But isn't there a need, also, for a recognition of a national interest that can best be furthered by public schools that hold up high standards?

I have outlined only some of the larger questions, all of them related to the overwhelming problems we expect educators to resolve. There are others. I have not spoken about the centrality of the classroom where, ultimately, what goes on depends not on the system, but on the contact between teacher and student. And on the personal ethics and honesty of each educator. Unfortunately, in a dishonest system, even the best of them will have trouble hanging on to the values they espoused when they chose their profession.

Of course, I don't believe that we will solve these problems over the next two days. But I would like us to examine the connections among them and, in the process, rethink the ramifications of continuing the status quo. Now, I want to welcome you all, and I want to remind you that we will leave time for audience discussions.

Now I will put on my other hat, and introduce the speakers for this first session. We will begin with Igor Webb, who is a former acting president at Adelphi University and the author of *Against Capitulation* and *From Custom to Capital: The English Novel and the Industrial Revolution*. He's been working for a long time with superintendents of schools, in order to coordinate raising standards in both high schools and universities. The next speaker is Kurt Scholz. He's the superintendent of schools of the city of

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Vienna, originally a historian, and he faces problems in some ways resembling our own. The third speaker is Rita Kramer. She's known for her books on education, recently *Why Education Fails in Schools: The Miseducation of American Teachers*. Last but not least we come to Chester Finn, the president of the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation. He's also an Olin fellow at the Hudson Institute and co-chairman of the Educational Excellence networks. I'm sure you've read some of his op-ed pieces in various newspapers. Now to Igor Webb.

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Session I: The Impact of High School Preparation on College Education

Igor Webb: Thank you very much, Edith. Good morning. I think as the first speaker it falls to me to thank Professor Kurzweil for once again gathering a fabulous group of people—not myself, of course, but everybody else. *You* have reason to thank her for having told me that the original draft of this paper was at least three times longer than could keep an audience awake. This version may not be better, but it is much shorter.

It is called "One Key to School Reform is Reform of Universities." I argue that many of the failures in the schools that we rightly complain of can be corrected by action on the part of our colleges and universities.

There are four areas of reform in the way universities conduct their affairs that I believe would have a profound impact on the schools. They are: mission and scope; leadership, especially by presidents and boards; standards, especially of admission; and relations with government.

When Frank Rhodes retired as president of Cornell, the university held a symposium in his honor that Cornell University Press recently published under the title, *The American University: National Treasure or Endangered Species?* The authoritative essays in this collection provide an illuminating, and for the most part dismal, picture of what leading educators believe is the mission of higher education today.

According to William G. Bowen, formerly president of Princeton and now head of the Mellon Foundation, going to college is important for work, and especially to make money. Students and employers strongly believe this to be so. Beyond preparation for work and wealth, these are the benefits that Mr. Bowen attributes to college: "Higher education provides many students with the basis for enjoying a much more satisfying life outside the workplace than would otherwise be possible. Such benefits may include mental stimulation. . .; preparation for highly rewarding involvement in civic and community activities; the development of values and personal qualities. . .; and, finally, the opportunity to get to know other highly talented people."

There's not much danger, I think you'll agree, that these cool, complacent words are going to supplant those of Cardinal Newman. But these are not, allow me to stress, the words of just anybody. Speaking is the mentor of the president of Harvard; the head of one of the nation's most important foundations; the former president of one of the world's foremost universities.

The sitting president of Princeton, the much more thoughtful Harold T. Shapiro, observes that the contemporary university has "recognized and incorporated into its curriculum the inevitability of complexity and ambiguity and the need for competitiveness in most of the important issues confronting humankind and scholarship."

In the context of this unsettling recognition, the contemporary university, Shapiro says, is able "to retain its coherence as an academic

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community through its shared beliefs in the open pursuit of truth and understanding, in a commonly held set of rational and humane standards to govern the modes of scholarship, and in the ultimate value of the products of the mind."

If we accept President Shapiro's assessment whole and don't quibble, then we have in hand a compact, authoritative, and sympathetic account of what the best in higher education today believe that colleges and universities stand for. And we can see right away, I think, and in stark relief, the dreadful impoverishment of our thinking, of our confidence, and indeed of our beliefs with respect to higher education and, more broadly, intellect itself.

Compare his words with those of a distinguished if somewhat marginal figure, whose books I happen to have been reading when *The American University*, with President Shapiro's essay in it, arrived in the mail. I mean the once fairly well-known and long-time president of Sarah Lawrence, Harold Taylor. In 1950—1950!—he edited a collection entitled *Essays in Teaching*, and wrote there: "What is under attack in Europe, in America, is the entire philosophy of liberalism, and with it the pattern of liberal education." This attack notwithstanding, he argued, "the task of the college is to teach liberalism. . . . [This] is done by teaching young people the content and meaning of these forms of knowledge (the sciences, the humanities, etc.) with the intention of developing in them a liberal attitude toward life and toward society."

Setting Shapiro and Taylor side by side brings out Shapiro's neglect of the most important question about any education: to what end? When I served as provost of a small, comprehensive university, Adelphi, I regularly asked CEOs what they most wanted to see in our graduates. They invariably said "someone who can read and write, add, talk, and especially think." And these are, put simply, what the job market requires of college graduates plus, maybe, a little special knowledge. No CEO I've ever spoken to has thought to propose qualities appropriate to a certain conception of human society. CEOs as much as educators are fixated on skills. And if we leave to one side the somewhat elusive faculty of thinking, which may benefit from some sort of higher education, surely the rest do not or ought not to require going to college.

In this context, I would argue that the leaders of higher education have three main responsibilities. The first, and probably the hardest, is to engage in a searching public dialogue aimed at securing a new national philosophy for higher education. I grant that this may be a very tough assignment since many things suggest that we are in the midst of one of those long periods of transition and criticism that Matthew Arnold saw as true of his own time more than one hundred years ago. We're not likely, therefore, to see a new consensus emerging quickly. But all the more reason for leaders of

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higher education to speak honestly about the nature of higher education, and what it can and cannot do. All the more reason that steps that can be taken to improve things now, in light of the possibility of a long period of uncertainty, ought to be taken. The most powerful action that colleges and universities can take, I believe, would be to address the vexed question of standards.

Finally, it's especially important for leaders of colleges and universities to speak out on the major issues of the day and break out of their silence on everything that does not bear on education. The reclaiming of the public role of university presidents would make thinkable once more the idea that education ought, first and last, to look to the nobility of our human adventure, to the imagining and enacting of civilization, and only in a more glancing way to worry over what, often misleadingly, we know as "practical learning," which often is best achieved by other means in other places.

This notion of the college presidency as entailing intellectual, moral, and educational leadership at the center of our public life was rendered archaic by the post-war or in any event the post-1960s development of the American university, which bred the kind of leader exemplified by Clark Kerr and made prominent by his definitive study *The Uses of the University.* The president as educator, the president as public intellectual, the president as supreme authority in his or her institution—such presidents will continue to be rare until a dominant new idea about the purpose of higher education takes hold, to supplant the one Kerr anatomized and that we live with. In the meantime there are nonetheless some things that can be done best by college and university presidents, and that are unlikely to happen if presidents do not do them. For example, today's presidents are best placed to remedy the extraordinary sloppiness with which standards of quality are brought to bear on education.

Despite the staggering growth of what one might call the "standards industry"—I mean the SATs, ACTs, and so forth—in fact whatever one might think the term to mean clearly does not apply to college admissions or college grading.

The evidence of poor comparative performance by American students in primary and secondary education is well known. Still, around 70 percent of high school graduates go on to college. About 30 percent of these require remedial help once they enter college. And yet the average grade that these students receive in college nationally is a little over B. So when people speak about "standards" in connection with successful college achievement they clearly have something different in mind from what one would normally associate with the word.

As for college admissions, the situation in all but the most selective institutions is grim and alarming. The proliferation of experts in enrollment planning, the growth of specialists in college publications, and the

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employment of aggressive marketing by colleges and universities may be inescapable. Nevertheless all this reflects a fundamental change since, let's say, the middle fifties, the last moment when admissions could be said to be selective for most institutions. At that time, the competition was still arguably among the students to enter college. Now the competition is among the colleges to get students. The over-expansion of higher education has created a fierce competition for students, especially among the vast majority of private institutions that have negligible endowments and so depend on student revenues for survival.

A little-remarked result of this ferocious competition for students is that the universal standard of intellectual standing among applicants—the SAT and so forth—is actually largely irrelevant to the admissions process. The truth is that it really doesn't much matter what your scores are, since some college will definitely take you regardless. Moreover, the average SAT scores of incoming students, by institutional category, are remarkably consistent. That is, Harvard and its competitors, Adelphi and its competitors, and so forth, accept students whose SAT scores are essentially the same within the rank or category of the college. With rare exceptions, the students who apply to Adelphi or its equivalent do not apply to Harvard, and vice-versa. So for the purposes of aiding admissions officers to choose among applicants, the SATs are largely irrelevant. The relevant questions for the vast majority of admissions officers have to do not with the distinguishing qualities of intellect or character that might qualify the student for admission but rather with the institutional qualities that might help attract the student, irrespective of his or her intellect or character.

For these reasons, I believe no single act would more quickly improve the nation's schools than the return to standards of admission among even half of the nation's colleges and universities. If students once more competed to gain admission to college—that is, if the process of admission genuinely selected among them, then the ethos of the average secondary school would be transformed more quickly and more deeply than by the implementation of any of the school reforms currently being proposed. The enormous forces driving secondary and higher education cannot, in my view, be resisted by imaginative and determined educational initiatives alone. Small successes here and there, created by exceptional leadership and exceptional circumstances, are the best one can expect in the face of the huge power of money to drive the system this way or that. The recent confession by officials of CUNY that any significant reduction in remedial programs would lead to a crippling loss of revenue necessary to underwrite other programs is just one example of the horrible tangle that the schools and the universities have got themselves into, and which cannot be undone by small or half measures. You have to go to the heart of the matter, I believe, which is the relation of standards to revenues.

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Consequently, even assuming that the higher education system could summon the will to act as I have suggested, to make it financially feasible, two further steps would be necessary for my proposals to have any chance at all of being realized. First, the way students are assessed for admission to college would have to change. I believe that the revival of institution-generated and institution-specific entrance exams, and the revival of school-and-college consortia on the lines of educational philosophy, are the most desirable changes. At present, there is a serious discontinuity between secondary school and college. Schools and colleges often have little to do with one another on an institutional level. The result is both educationally inefficient and impoverishing. It would make far more sense, and would educate students better, if each college or university worked closely—on curriculum, learning goals, and so forth—with a consortium of schools, public and private, that could be said to share a similar educational outlook. At a minimum, students in these schools would not suffer the now common experience of an aimless senior year, and college counselors and college admissions officers would have the benefit of a thorough knowledge of the capabilities of those applying to a particular college. At best, such relations would enable far richer, more profound, curricula in the schools and could create a true diversity of powerful educational practices across the school and college divide.

One way to protect such relations from favoritism in college admissions, and to allow students from outside any given consortium access to a particular college, would be to reinstitute entrance exams, a step that should be taken in any case on educational grounds alone. These exams could resemble the kinds of exams widely given by colleges earlier in the century, which stressed knowledge of certain set subjects and the ability to demonstrate one's intelligence and knowledge in relation to these subjects; or they could, alternatively, or in addition, test certain skills or qualities of mind. Such a change in the practice of admission to college would have immediate and hugely beneficial effects on secondary education, both in terms of expectations of learning and on preparation for college.

A second important change that would greatly ease the road back to standards of admission and achievement is a change in the role of government in relation to higher education. For a variety of reasons, federal and state policies, regardless of the party in power, have fostered an inexorable expansion of public and to a lesser extent private higher education. These policies have made government the single most important underwriter of public and private colleges and universities. Excluding support for research, the political rationale for almost all government support of higher education relates to the numbers of students enrolled. That's the main basis for the direct funding of public institutions, and for the indirect funding of

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private ones. Since—in the short run and perhaps in the long run—the application of actual standards of admission and of grading will result in declining enrollments, only a new political basis for the funding of higher education could secure the changes I have been advocating on a broad scale.

Given the enormous political and financial investment in the higher education system, it's hard to be too optimistic that any new dispensation in this lucrative sector of the economy might actually be realized. Still, I think it may be possible to shift the role of government away from its present, ostensibly democratic concentration on access and numbers to a more truly democratic emphasis on ensuring an educationally diverse and competitive system of higher education. Government ought actively to encourage the most important competition appropriate to colleges and universities, the competition of ideas, including educational ideas. To transform the present role of government, the higher education lobbies ought to be encouraging experimentation with other means of funding than reliance on enrollment numbers. In addition, I think it would greatly clarify the functions of various parts of the existing system if the proliferation of co-op education and of internships and similar things were taken to its logical conclusion by active government support of university, school, and employer partnerships organized around a variety of workplace-related educational enterprises. I see no reason why we could not in the United States borrow, but turn to our purposes, the extremely useful differentiation in the British system between "further" and "higher" education.

The reforms I have been outlining would, if they were adopted, redress many of the failures of our schools. I'm less sure that my prescriptions would redress the larger failure not only of our schools but even more of our universities, the loss of purpose and aim, the failure to educate the spirit.

Inevitably, someone like me, schooled in the literature of the nineteenth century, thinks at this point of Matthew Arnold. One of his most distinguished editors, J. Dover Wilson, described Arnold's educational vision as "the indefinite multiplication of non-residential Rugby schools under state supervision."

More than one hundred years after the publication of *Culture and Anarchy,* I suspect that many of us, I certainly, look back on the realization of Arnold's vision both with amazement and with the gnawing sense that his idea of liberal education may have run its course. The universal spread of public education and its ideal of a liberally educated citizenry represents a great and perhaps unparalleled educational experiment. But by today, in the universities, Arnold's notion of education has been overcome by the dissolution of its basic tenets under the assault of specialization, of the seismic changes in scientific theory and knowledge and the equally seismic changes in the nature of national and global politics and economics, and

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under the assault of the intellectual movements of postmodernism. And also, not least, by the dominance of professional education. The spread of state schools and of liberal education advanced from the start hand in hand with the spread of professional education, which in any event had been the model for American colleges to begin with. In the post-World War II United States this professional part of higher education expanded at breakneck speed, so much so that today the liberal arts have been relegated to a marginal, musty, and neglected corner of the vast, complex academic enterprise—but an enterprise changed out of all recognition from Arnold's vision of culture and Dover Wilson's vision of higher education.

Conveniently, in *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold does not omit to make reference to Cornell University, with which I started. Here is what he says: "The university of Mr. Ezra Cornell, a really noble monument of his munificence, yet seems to rest on a misconception of what culture truly is, and to be calculated to produce miners, or engineers, or architects, not sweetness and light."

And yet, I think those of us on this side of the Atlantic anyway would say that Cornell seems to have managed to produce learned engineers, cultured engineers, visionary engineers, as well as engineers blind to beauty and deaf to intelligence. Arnold's fussy devotion to a single road to high seriousness, while making a point, also obscured for Arnold and therefore maybe for many of us the vigor and—if I may use the word—the diversity of intellectual paths to culture.

If Arnold could misjudge the likely development of Cornell, then those of us like me who don't find much to rave about in the values, attitudes, and practices of today's higher education should be warned against a too easy and comforting despair. For it does seem that once you gather people together under the guise of education, education may actually occur, despite the intentions of founders and professors. Besides, if Arnold's narrow but lofty and religious notion of education could triumph, as it did, over the legendary philistinism of his own time, then the chances of redirecting our own system to ends grander than the falsely practical might not be so poor after all.

Edith Kurzweil: Thank you, Igor. Next we hear from Kurt Scholz.

Kurt Scholz: Ladies and gentlemen, dear Professor Kurzweil, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to speak here and participate in this conference. I'll try to outline the Austrian experience, which I've divided into four parts. First, I will compare systems, then discuss immigration to Austria and integration in Vienna. Then I will describe some structures and standards of our school system in a short outline. And finally, I will

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speak about the responsibility of politics and the obligation of societies for school systems.

Comparing school systems is no less difficult than comparing societies. Every international comparison of education and school organization is faced with an almost insoluble problem that we know from the comparisons of parliamentary, political, and party systems. Educational organizations are part of a much more complicated overall social system. They cannot be truly understood without looking at the whole social, political system, at the value system of a society, at the distribution of power within a society, the "haves and the have-nots." No educational system can be discussed without the question of whether (and to what extent) equality or inequality and the realization of equal opportunities is predominant or not. John Dewey, probably the most important pedagogical thinker of the first half of our century, once expressed it this way: "Education is life, and school is society."

Austria is a small country in Europe and compared to the United States only a dot on the globe. But, almost without exception, all of our guests from the United States are envious of our school system, mostly for the following reasons: first, the almost total lack of criminality, the almost total lack of drug and drug-related (violent) crimes. Another reason is the exemplary treatment of private schools in Austria. The private schools in my country have all teachers' salaries paid by the government (and despite that, the enrollment statistics in Vienna's private schools show a decreasing number of pupils mostly because public schools seem to be more attractive amongst parents). We also have an internationally renowned school building architecture. Moreover, the national state guarantees that every teacher will be paid the same amount (not differing from one local authority to another) and that teachers will be better paid than most other civil servants. And we have a relatively lean school management with educators and former active teachers in almost every key position.

In the eyes of many of our visitors, Austria is a blessed land, an island of bliss, at least as far as the schools are concerned. But as an observer for over twenty years I have to say I am fascinated by the pedagogic discussions in the United States. The contradictions within the American school system are highly interesting for any innocent from abroad. In my visits to American schools I have met mostly extremely committed teachers. But I understand that some of those teachers also feel that they are working under unfair conditions—extreme inequalities. To me, the twenty minutes from Stuyvesant High School to Seward Park High School in Manhattan are not merely a pleasant walk—they are a journey from the developed world deep into the heart of darkness, into the Third World, into differences that are hard to understand from a European point of view.

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Emigration to Austria and integration in Vienna. The question of integration is essentially linked to Viennese and Austrian history. Around 1900, Vienna was the melting pot par excellence. But unlike New York and other American cities, in Vienna the various immigrant groups were really "melted" together and did not remain separate pieces of a mosaic. Vienna profited immensely from this integration but the negative side should not go unmentioned.

Emigration and integration always cause opposition—and the situation in Vienna was by no means different. The Aryan super-being as an opposing model to the "cosmopolitan racial mixture" is the darker side of Vienna's history. It started as an aggressive prejudice and ended in the Holocaust. But after the second World War, waves of immigrants have also swept into Austria. The Hungarian refugees in 1956, the victims of the Prague Spring in 1968, the large and very discreet migrational movement of Jewish emigrants from Russia and Eastern Europe moving to the free world via Austria, the Polish refugees, the thousands of migrant workers from Turkey and former Yugoslavia, and the most dramatic changes in Eastern Europe, the fall of the Iron Curtain and the war in former Yugoslavia caused waves of immigrants to come to Vienna. The number of foreign students in Vienna's elementary schools has risen from 7 percent or 8 percent to as much as 36 percent. This is far higher than in other European cities. Nevertheless, the Viennese school organizations solved the problem quietly and efficiently. There were perhaps sounds of whining and wailing in the political arena but not within the school systems.

What were the reasons for this? First, and most importantly, in Vienna, the teacher-pupil ratio is 1:8, so there is one teacher for every eight pupils, statistically. This sets a European record. Of course, this figure does not truly reflect the reality of a school class in Vienna, where there are approximately twenty to twenty-four pupils. But our system is generous, allowing for a two-teacher system. If necessary, one teacher can personally take care of five, three, two, and sometimes even only one pupil (according to personal preference or plan during or outside normal class time). In working with handicapped children, the two-teacher teaching system is normal (and often there is a third teacher with special training, such as a speech therapist, and so on). Vienna never had special classes for foreign pupils; our philosophy was not to segregate, and even during the war in the former Yugoslavia when the pupils' relatives were fighting against each other there was never any violence among the different ethnic groups in our school classes. Children are international, more so than grown-ups. In my opinion, the greatest contribution of our school system to the society is of other than a "pure pedagogic" nature: it contributes enormously to the internal stability of our country, to the peaceful relationship between different

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ethnic groups. Schools are part of the inner security of our society. Not that the Viennese school system is an "island of saints," as Pope John Paul II once said about Austria. We still have too many non-Austrian children in the lower forms of education and not enough of them studying at university. But there also is an upward trend. During the past academic year, every fourth child from an immigrant family attended schools that prepared them for university.

What does the inner structure of this school system look like? Here I can give only a brief outline. Our educational system is characterized by a relatively firm, regulated structure—it's a highly selective system. Personally, I could imagine a less regulated type of teaching, but I have to admit, contrary to my rather progressive thinking, that the conservative structure of our school system provides for many children a certain sense of security, especially for children coming from other countries, or emotionally unstable ones. In Austria children (and their parents) know exactly what the school expects of them. It's not entertainment, not "edutainment," but the old-fashioned task of learning. On the whole, the form of teaching is also relatively well-structured. We have a pupil attendance of 100 percent, regular homework assignments, written tests in all major subjects, oral exams, presentations by students, extensive papers in the final two years of grammar school and high school as preparation for university, and very close co-operation with Austrian universities. Foreign children have their own language training, of course in their mother tongue, but they do not have their own school system. They have every bit of assistance, but no exceptions are made for them. For example, if they want to go to university, they must learn Latin just like any Austrian student.

The standard scope of knowledge in Austrian schools, our curriculum, is relatively traditional. It caters to the entire range of the sometimes ridiculed occidental tradition. In history, it covers the ancient civilizations, Greek and Roman history, the Middle Ages, the discoveries, the great revolutions of the eighteenth century, the social and philosophical upheavals of the nineteenth century, the cosmopolitan, humanitarian view of the twentieth century. Emphasis is put on mathematics and science, in my mind not enough, but I think we are a European role model in early-language teaching and foreign-language teaching. In Vienna, for instance, almost 100 percent of primary school pupils are taught English from the age of eight onwards, and about 60 percent of the children even start at the age of six. And there is an increasing number of primary schools where a second foreign language, mainly French, is introduced as a voluntary subject. Until enrollment at university, most Austrian students will have studied English, a second modern language (mostly French) and Latin. We believe that in intellectual terms we are preparing our students quite well

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for the world. By the way, without standardized tests but with a tightly-knit system of academically well-trained teachers we are producing more teachers than we can currently employ. From the personal point of view this may be a tragedy but for the standards I think it's not so bad. And we have a well-working net of powerful school superintendents. One superintendent, on average, for twelve to fourteen schools. If you compare this to New York there is one superintendent for Manhattan, one for the Bronx, one for Queens, and so on.

A school system is the responsibility of politics and of the society. In Austria, cutting costs in the educational sector is not very popular. This may be due to the fact that many Austrians (the generation after the second World War in particular) have moved up the social ladder and have recognized how much this upward mobility was helped by their good education. And on a national political level there is the understanding that Austria (like Japan) does not possess raw materials. We are not a rich country, so that our qualifications are one of the main economic assets of our country.

Moreover, in the European context, which right now is becoming more and more important for all European countries, the Austrian educational system (between the notoriously strong and highly-qualified German and Swiss systems) constitutes a permanent challenge in quality. But Austrian school politics embody no universal truth. Perhaps one goal of our school politics is to develop and practice some sense of belonging to a community, especially for immigrant children. Another goal is the development of democracy: it should be the task of a school system to soften opposites, not to entrench them. By this I am referring to the softening of the opposites between Austrians and non-Austrians, the disabled and non-disabled persons, the poor and the rich.

To reach this goal, there is no Rosetta stone for a school administration, no point of Archimedes. You simply have to take clear responsibility and to try putting your work into the larger perspective of the peaceful development of a society. Sometimes this is an uphill struggle. And I think that what John Dewey said about philosophy is also true about school politics: "Better it is for school politics to err in active participation in the living struggles and issues of its own times than to maintain an immune, monastic implacability." But it's not only the clear responsibility of the school system to serve society; the society has a clear responsibility as well.

Finally I'd like to borrow from a speech made in the United States by a famous citizen of Vienna. You will not be surprised when I, coming from Vienna, quote what Sigmund Freud said, and the comparison he used when he was invited to read at Clark University in 1909. He closed one of his famous five lectures with a warning, recalling a story of a *Schildbürger,*

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the petty bourgeois citizens living in a small community. It's the type of story you have in all countries, *Schilda* in Germany, *Abdera* in ancient Greece, Gotham in the United States—the kind of citizen who builds a house and forgets the windows and tries to carry the light for the house in boxes. Freud used another story, about the simple-minded inhabitants of the fictitious city of *Schilda* who had been given a horse to help them in their work. The city, the society, the horse, the school system—of course, for Freud the horse was human sexuality. At first the citizens were very content with the animal—it was hard-working, pretty to look at, strong, and obedient. It had only one fault, one drawback—it ate oats.

Thus, the citizens decided to wean the animal from this disadvantage. They were clever enough not to do this from one day to another: every day they gave the horse one stalk of oats less. Finally, the happy day had come. The horse was still working. Of course, it was working less, it was not so pretty any more, and much less obedient. But it was weaned from eating. The citizens celebrated this success with a great banquet. But how did the story end? Sadly enough, and in one single sentence: "On the next day, the malicious animal died."

Our school systems must be spared this fate. As far as this story regards the universities and academic life, you know more than I. Thank you for your attention.

Edith Kurzweil: Thank you, Kurt Scholz. The next speaker is Rita Kramer.

Rita Kramer: Good morning. Seven years ago I published a book subtitled "The Miseducation of America's Teachers." Its reception by the educational establishment was something like that accorded the more stringent judgments of Jeremiah by the ancient Hebrews. I shall continue my lamentations this morning, noting that nothing has changed. How many authors can look back and say, "I have no reason to modify a word of what I wrote years ago about a situation that is supposed to be volatile, ripe for change, and subject to political influence from various directions?" It is not a happy fate. But it does enable me to summarize what I wrote then with no disclaimer that any of it has ceased to apply.

What I found as I made my way through schools and departments of education in colleges and universities around the country was a culture that varied little from one institution to another despite the lip service paid to "diversity." A uniformity of attitude characterized the young men and women preparing to take their places in the nation's classrooms, as it did those who were preparing them for that day.

I started with the belief that at the center of the learning process stands the teacher capable of inspiring the student. I hoped to meet some of the

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best and brightest but, with rare exceptions, encountered only the mediocre. Never the brightest, although sometimes perhaps the good, if not the best. It is a truth universally acknowledged that applicants to ed school have comparatively low SAT scores—an average combined verbal and math score of 964 in 1997—and equally unimpressive high school grade point averages. They're not choosing between becoming teachers and becoming rocket scientists. The mother of a boy who was having trouble making the cut for admission to ed school summed it up for me: if he couldn't become a teacher he could only look forward to a future on the assembly line.

Still, many such young people make their way into positions caring for the youngest pupils. I say "caring" because that is exactly how they characterize themselves and their function. They say they chose teaching because they love children. They never say they love learning. And while many of them succeed in making the schoolhouse a warm and welcoming place, they are hardly equipped to suggest to their young charges the magic of words, the power of myth, or the admirable qualities of the heroes of the past who have shaped our present world. Those figures they have themselves learned to present as exemplars are chosen for crassly political reasons. So ask a third-grader today to name a famous figure in American history and you are more likely to hear the name of Harriet Tubman than that of George Washington. Thomas Jefferson, if he comes up at all, will be identified as a slave owner. Diversity has its reasons, but presenting a true perspective on who and what has shaped our past is not one of them.

As for those who would teach older students, those in junior high and secondary school, many of them must also be described as among the good in the sense that they are idealists. They aim to change the world, and they are smart enough to know that the way to do it is to influence the minds of the young. They themselves are taught by the tenured radicals whose favorite text is *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. They have never read *The Federalist Papers*. Their view of the society in which they live is an antinomian one; they think Marx's theories have never been given a real chance, and they decry the so-called canon as an instrument of enforcing the hegemony of white European men, for whose works they substitute a curriculum made up as far as possible by those of women of color. This is not a parody, and I remind you that these are the bright ones from among those who go into teaching. And so, whether because of ignorance or ideology, most students in America today are deprived of any serious acquaintance with the Western tradition, with the treasures and trials of our civilization, and with the means of carrying on the culture.

This is the crux of the situation: the transformation of the schools from transmitters of a common culture to agencies of social change. The

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schools of education have effectively been politicized in the name of the values of the sixties counterculture. Teachers are trained to view the school as a therapeutic milieu that places concerns for the physically and emotionally handicapped over concern for the able and the interested, and as a social laboratory that aims to inculcate self-esteem on the basis of group identity. A push for egalitarianism has replaced an emphasis on individual achievement, and the intellectually adventurous student is the odd man out.

I have not been back to the bastions of political correctness that I visited in order to write *Ed School Follies* but everything I read and hear leads me to believe that what I found there has only become more entrenched in policy and practice.

By way of illustration I will take as my text today a publication that owes its existence to the efforts of the next speaker, Chester Finn, who has done as much as anyone to push the engine of reform toward the light at the end of the tunnel.

An instructive—no pun intended—look into the mind-set of the typical professor of education was provided last year with the publication of a report by Public Agenda, a nonpartisan group that surveyed nine hundred education faculty members at colleges and universities throughout the country. These teachers of teachers were typically of the opinion that maintaining discipline and order and teaching grammar, correct spelling, and punctuation were beneath the classroom teacher. What they hoped to convey to the nation's prospective teachers instead was the importance of "lifelong learning" and how to teach their students to be "active learners." Lest you think of Socrates or other such active lifelong learners as Thomas Edison, Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein, or Sigmund Freud, let me tell you what the professors have in mind.

First of all, forget what we usually refer to as basic skills. Lovers of learning don't need them and should never be discouraged by the threat of being held back from the next grade. The process of learning is more important than whether or not any specific knowledge is gained in the process. In fact, the professors of teaching express contempt for the teaching of any specific facts or, as I so often heard them referred to in my journey through the nine circles of ed schools—"mere facts." (A phrase which, whenever I heard it, always reminded me of an anecdote, possibly apocryphal but illustrative nevertheless, about Alfred North Whitehead, who was reputed to be a singularly soft touch when it came to recommending his students for academic positions. The story goes that once, when faced with a request for a letter of recommendation for a more than usually hopeless candidate, he wrote, "This man is no mere scholar.")

The lifelong learner the ed school professors have in mind is going to be more active manually than mentally, since he should start right out

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using calculators to solve abstract problems. Nor should he be burdened with remembering such details as the names and geographical locations of the fifty states. The important thing is that he know where to look up such information. Nor should the granting of a diploma be contingent on the mastery of any skills demonstrated by an objective test of the discredited multiple-choice variety, dependent as it is on reading comprehension, a skill most of the members of the current teaching pool themselves are unable to demonstrate having mastered.

The Praxis I exam, the teacher competency test devised by the Educational Testing Service and used by some twenty states, assesses only the most basic reading, writing, and math skills. The test sets such problems as to arrange World War I, the Great Depression, the New Deal, and the Korean War in correct chronological order, a task that eludes many would-be teachers. On a scale running from 600 to 695, the national average for test-takers is 657. The questions on California's Basic Educational Skills Test are no more difficult than the state's proposed math standards for fifth-graders—and only two-thirds of would-be teachers pass the first time around. In my home state, New York, the Teacher Certification Exam tests reading skills that should be the province of any normal sixth-grader and no substantive knowledge of any kind. But where there is no fixed body of knowledge, only "multiple perspectives," what can be tested beyond what are considered good intentions?

The portfolio assessment is the favored mode of—what shall one say? Not judgment, or grading, both of which are frowned upon—perhaps appraisal will do. And this appraisal is only to serve the purpose of acquainting the teacher with the student's individual approach to problem solving, whatever it may be. There is to be no competition for academic placement such as grades, no honor roll, no rewards for achievement, and no risks of failure. It's a no-fault system in which the team approach results in group grades. Group learning is considered more democratic, presumably because the essence of democracy is taken to be that everyone should be indistinguishable, rather than that everyone should have the opportunity to distinguish himself.

And everything in ed school reinforces these values and these attitudes, honed by the followers of John Dewey and promulgated by such founts of progressive education philosophy as Columbia University's Teachers College.

These entrenched educrats, the professors of education, the administrators of left-liberal foundations, the union officials and the legislators who owe much to their financial support and their lobbying efforts, and above all the dedicated members of the United States Department of Education, claim that there is a crisis in our schools.

There is always a crisis in our schools, and a concomitant crying need for reform. But there is reason to question the nature of the crisis at hand.

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The educational establishment claims there is a drastic shortage of teachers. And they are right. There is a shortage of teachers if you define a teacher as someone with a fund of knowledge and the desire and ability to transmit that knowledge to the young.

But what they are asking billions of dollars of the taxpayers' money for is to produce more of the overtrained but undereducated teachers who qualify for positions in the public schools under the present system of credentialing. The National Commission on Teaching and America's Future has issued a call for "professionalization." What its members, primarily drawn from the teachers' unions, the major education schools and their related organizations, the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, have in mind is closing the door to any prospective teacher who has not graduated from an NCATE-approved school. These are the institutions that have brought us the misguidedly well-meaning and pathetically ignorant teachers in today's classrooms. One of the respondents to the Public Agenda survey defined their mission thus: "[Teachers] should see themselves not as transmitters of knowledge, but as allowing students to learn how to learn themselves."

Asking students to teach themselves and each other may not be as bizarre an idea as it seems in a system in which their teachers know as little as the present teaching force, schooled in pedagogical method and all but innocent of any substantive knowledge. They have spent years learning how to teach but almost no time acquiring anything worth teaching. After years of mind-numbing courses in the latest fads in classroom methodology, the history of educational philosophies, strategies for educating the variously handicapped (euphemistically referred to as "special education") and techniques for teaching in languages other than that used by most citizens and most businesses in the country (euphemistically referred to as "bilingual education"), plus some practice teaching that most of them later identify as the only useful part of their preparation, they are considered to possess the credentials necessary to be hired as classroom teachers.

What they are missing are the rudiments of what it means to be educated themselves—knowledge of the culture, history, and traditions of our democratic society and its institutions, an overview and appreciation of the great achievements in the sciences, literature, and the arts, and an ability to communicate these things in the richness of language appropriate to their understanding. How meager is the learning possessed by the average teacher today is made clear when we realize that more than a third of those now teaching such essential subjects as English and math neither majored nor even minored in those subjects. Two out of every five science teachers never took science as their major or minor field of study, and three out

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of five of those who "teach" history or geography are equally bereft of academic experience in the field they are now assigned to teach.

As education historian Diane Ravitch tells us, most teachers of history, which is taught today in social studies programs, have degrees in education that are unrelated to any academic field and derive solely from mind-numbing courses in mainstreaming special education students, bilingual education, health education, curriculum and instruction, educational administration, audiovisual aids, counseling and guidance, and similar pedagogical busywork. If they have learned anything about the influential individuals and critical events in the history of their country or that of the larger world, it is by sheerest accident. The years in which they might have done so were spent instead in getting acquainted with the latest instructional fads—the "whole language" method of not learning to read; the "new math" constructivist approach in which children arrive at their own solutions to the problems of their own choosing; and discredited memorization or "rote learning" are replaced with abstract concepts—and with the principles of multiculturalism and the many ways of inculcating self-esteem, always excepting the way that results from actual accomplishment—finishing hard work, getting the answer right, mastering the problem at hand.

What's to be done? Can teacher education be turned around? Well, yes and no. It could be, but I fear it is not likely to be, except by small increments, over a long period of time. As you may have guessed, I'm not optimistic, given the weight of the forces arrayed against real reform—the vested interests of the credentialing institutions, the power of the unions enforcing seniority and tenure regulations that put the economic interests of their members ahead of the welfare of students, and the ideological slant of the government bureaucrats more concerned with attitudes on race and gender than with literacy. Here, nevertheless, is what I think could be done to change the way we prepare our teachers. I offer these suggestions tentatively, always mindful of the fate of Jeremiah.

First, and most essential, is the necessity of upgrading the quality of mind of those who are to become teachers. They should be educated men and women, who know something besides techniques for how to teach. They should be the possessors of something worth teaching. And let's face it—a college degree today is hardly the guarantee of a liberal education, or even of mastery of a "major" subject. But it should be the bare minimum for teaching that subject. The prospective teacher should have specialized in the study of some discipline—be it English literature, modern European history, mathematics, biology, or physics—and be able to demonstrate a wide-ranging understanding of the field in an examination. It should no longer be possible to take charge of a classroom with a background of Mickey Mouse education courses and a barely passing grade on a minimum skills test.

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Ideally, a teacher should have at least a bachelor's degree in the subject to be taught, combined with some training in teaching that subject at an appropriate level. I say "combined" because I think almost all of what goes on in ed school is a waste of time, to say nothing of taxpayer funds. The best class in preparing future teachers that I witnessed in a year of auditing ed school offerings was a class devoted to the Italian high Renaissance, an anomaly in the curriculum of a large university where it was possible for education students to elect such a course in the history department. These young men and women were having their minds opened to the ideas and arts and political developments of the Quattrocento, and every once in a while during his lecture and the discussion that followed, the professor would insert a comment, perhaps a tip, along the lines of, "Now, a good way to make this clear to your students. . . ." or "Here's a comparison with something your kids will recognize. . . ." I'm suggesting that a good teacher of any subject can transmit the knowledge of how to teach that subject while doing so, both by precept and example. And I'd add some months of practice teaching with mentoring by experienced teachers before the novice took over a classroom.

What's wrong with this picture? In the public school today the novice teacher will be required to deal with mainstreamed handicapped students along with those who are ready for more challenging fare. Until at least some teachers are freed from the obligations imposed by the special education requirements, the ed schools are likely to retain their monopoly in the public schools.

So while working toward the goal of replacing pedagogy with intellectual substance, the strategy must be to make an end run around the ed schools and the teachers' unions. Here, of course, is where the burgeoning charter school movement can make a difference, hiring teachers who have not followed the lockstep credentialing route. I am thinking in particular of the mid-life career changers, retired military personnel, and young people fresh out of liberal arts programs, all of whom have either life experience or a commitment to a newly acquired fund of knowledge to offer in place of state certification. You'll hear more from others about charter schools. In this context they shine as the one bright hope for immediate relief from the unqualified credentialed teacher.

Higher standards of knowledge and understanding, demonstrated by national testing, is the answer to the teacher training conundrum. But as Chester Finn has pointed out, "testing" is anathema to the Left, as "national" is to the Right. Nor are we a society largely concerned with intellectual distinction. American children spend more hours watching television than doing homework, and most American parents are satisfied with their children's schooling. They're bringing home good grades and if

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our kids' test scores in math and science are among the lowest in the industrialized world (we must take what comfort we can from knowing that on the most recent international study of general math knowledge our kids did better than those of Cyprus; in science they beat Lithuania), well, they're going on to college anyway.

It will take time and a lot of effort to carry the day. But if charter schools succeed in showing what children can learn from teachers who have not been trained by the ed schools and are not controlled by the unions, it may be possible to create a system in which the idea of a common culture can prevail and be extended.

Where to begin? Well, to paraphrase Dick the Butcher in *Henry VI*, the first thing we do, let's kill all the education professors. But that being an impractical suggestion, we have to content ourselves with trying to wake up an indifferent public to the facts of the case: how an ideological agenda (what John O'Sullivan of *National Review* has called "liberal utopianism") has pushed out core knowledge, replacing academic effort with political indoctrination, substituting attitudes for basic skills. Public awareness of the issues is the necessary precondition for public arousal; it means finding ways of reaching people with other things on their minds, overcoming their inertia, and motivating them to support change. Conferences like this are nice, but we're all friends and we need to get the attention of strangers, to talk not just to each other but to them.

It can be done, and in fact the national uproar over the publication of the infamous government-supported U.S. and world history standards in 1994—the many articles, op-ed pieces, and letters to the editor it occasioned—lit a spark that shouldn't be allowed to die out. There is a potential force for change if the voting public can be made aware of the mess that is public education today and the extent to which the schools have been co-opted by the federal government/ed school/teachers' union complex.

That force should be brought to bear on governors and state legislatures to allow the operation of greater numbers of charter schools and, once the legislation is in place, on state education departments and local school boards to grant their approval to more of them. At the same time more private foundations should be encouraged to fund charter schools and voucher programs. And if independent—that means truly bipartisan—local boards can be insulated from political pressures, it might be possible to begin loosening up the system and restoring learning as the main activity in the classroom.

What has to happen, though, if real change is to occur, is an end to the requirement of a degree in education as the ticket to a teaching job. We may not be able to do away with ed school, but we can make it superfluous. I can't think of a single thing that would be more conducive to the health of the nation's young and the promise of its citizenry. Thank you.

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Edith Kurzweil: Thank you, Rita Kramer. Next is Chester Finn.

Chester Finn: I visited a wonderful school yesterday, in this very city. It was a charter school in a tough part of town, enrolling a hundred tough kids, from grades six and seven, almost all from tough inner-city circumstances. They were being brilliantly taught serious stuff and their actual learning was being carefully monitored. When they weren't learning enough, they came back for more, sometimes involuntarily. Their parents were deeply engaged, every week, in the work of the school and the performance of their kids. It was as good a school as I have ever seen. This was a public charter school that started this year. I asked the principal, who's a friend and one-time protegée of mine, how many of the teachers are certified? She said, "I don't know. They don't need to be certified in order to be hired by charter schools in this state." She had six hundred applicants. With one hundred kids she obviously didn't have to hire very many of them. I left feeling quite buoyed, knowing that it's possible to run good schools, even in the most adverse of social circumstances. The question is, why don't we do more of this? I'm glad that Rita mentioned charter schools, and other "end runs," as she puts it, around the system. That is why I'm finally somewhat more optimistic about the prospects for change in U.S. K-12 education. But for a bunch of reasons it's bloody difficult. Partly this is because we don't have a European school system—a tidy, well-controlled, carefully-planned, meticulously supervised education system. Partly it's because K-12 education in the United States is in utter chaos. Almost anything can happen in the interstices and around the edges, in the form of alternatives, exceptions, and options. And the more those interstices show developments such as the ones we're beginning to see, the more optimistic I feel. But it's not coming from anything carefully coordinated or centrally planned. This creates an interesting paradox, as we think about strategies for educational change in the future. We have heard four very interesting presentations, including Edith's own opening comments, which I thought were extremely provocative, about the number of reform ideas on the table. Only one allusion gave me a little pause, when she referred to the current set of legislative proposals, if I heard her right, as being "from the bottom of the president's heart." My wife is a cardiac pathologist, and I think even she would have difficulty finding that particular anatomic spot. Other than that, I thought this was a very interesting set of propositions.

Today I'll talk about the intersection of primary/secondary education on the one hand and higher education on the other. Mostly I'm interested in how what's going on in K-12 education affects what's going on in the universities, sort of the opposite perspective from what Igor was talking

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about. I'm going to hurry through ten ways in which the crisis in K-12 education affects our universities, and then talk a bit about the way universities affect, mostly for ill, what goes on in the elementary/secondary system. Understand, though, that this intersection between elementary/secondary and higher education is not a simple crossroads. It's more like Dupont Circle, or one of those roundabouts in Paris where all the streets come together.

One street has to do with the movement of students, how high school students flood into the colleges, and how the standards of the one affect the standards of the other. Another street has to do with the movement of ideas and knowledge, how developments in the university make their way into the K-12 system. Another street, the one Rita was talking about, pertains to the training of education professionals. Where do those millions of teachers and principals in K-12 come from? Obviously, from our university campuses. And then there is the road we might call "educational and pedagogical philosophy." Where do the notions that prevail in the schools come from? Well, they, too, come from the universities and occasionally echo back into them in different ways.

Now let me close in on the ways in which the crisis in K-12 education affects the post-secondary system. We could have a two-day conference on the nature of the crisis itself. Mostly, I'll talk about the weak academic achievement that the National Commission on Excellence in Education said fifteen years ago was posing a grave peril to the well-being of the United States. This weakness was documented again two months ago by the Third International Math and Science Study, which showed U.S. kids ahead of only Cyprus and South Africa at the end of high school. Our students had done quite well in fourth grade; they were close to the international average in eighth grade. But by twelfth grade they had reached the cellar, the sub-basement, of international performance. What accounts for that? People have wisecracked that we're the only country in the world whose kids get dumber the longer they stay in school. We're certainly the only country in the world whose children slipped severely in international ranking as the lower grades ascended toward the higher grades. Anyway, the main crisis is that our kids aren't learning enough. A tiny number of students is emerging with a good education, a large number with a mediocre education, and a lamentable number with almost no education at all—to judge by the numbers of students who score "below basic" on the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Thirty to forty percent in twelfth grade, not counting dropouts, can barely read and write or do arithmetic. The lack of knowledge and skills on the part of high school graduates is the first of the ten elements of elementary/secondary education with special salience for the college curriculum. What does it

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mean to enroll a freshman in your university who doesn't know when or why the Civil War was fought; who has never written a paper of more than a couple of pages; whose math ends at algebra, if there; whose acquaintance with literature is likely to include Maya Angelou and, if we're lucky, Hemingway rather than Dickens, Faulkner, or Milton; who cannot distinguish Dred Scott from F. Scott Fitzgerald; and who could not accurately locate more than six countries if handed a blank map of the world?

Not to put too fine a point on it, I think it means that the college curriculum is forced—like it or not—to become more like what the high school curriculum should have been. College becomes the place to get a secondary education just as, for many young people, high school was the place for a primary education. Is it any wonder that a lot of employers, needing to hire people with a bona fide tertiary education, are now looking for post-graduate degrees as evidence of what we might call "higher" education? That lack of fundamental skills and knowledge on the part of entering students is issue number one.

Issue number two: the young people entering our colleges are unaccustomed, by virtue of their K-12 education, to demanding intellectual standards—but are used to being told that they're doing great. Middle school classrooms around the country drip with self-esteem, something called "emotional intelligence," and other forms of affective learning that turn into grade inflation when they get to college. Try giving those college students a C or a D—sometimes even a B—and see what reaction you get. They have been told they're nearly perfect in the elementary/secondary system, even though they were getting by with slovenly academic work. That same study of math and science that showed American twelfth-graders to be near the cellar in actual knowledge also asked the classic question, "How do you think you're doing in math and science?" Our twelfth-graders were tied for first place in self-regard. This is not an accident, but is induced by the elementary/secondary system. It means that the colleges get freshmen who don't know much, but think they're great.

Third, they're not used to working hard. They got through school without rewriting papers, without doing long division by hand (they had calculators), without wrestling with difficult texts, without burning the midnight oil at the library. Lots of them had jobs, they had boyfriends, they were on teams, they went to parties. They may have been busy as can be, but many of them minored in academics while in high school. They're used to coasting, yet getting by.

Fourth, school has not nurtured their character, their virtues, their values, or their moral fiber. Lots of K-12 schooling is still value-neutral in a self-concious way, and lots of teachers are very wary of, as they would say, "imposing their values" on their students. The curriculum also encourages

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relativism. Things like right and wrong, beautiful and ugly, and good and bad, noble and villainous may be murky distinctions to entering college students, unless they happened to pick them up in church or perhaps from their parents. They sure weren't likely to pick them up from TV.

Fifth, they enter without good study habits. They didn't need them to make a go of high school. Often they could avoid homework, could cram at the last minute for tests, could sit quietly instead of participating in class, could borrow term papers from the Internet, could use plot summaries and other short cuts rather than wrestling with the textbook, much less an original text. If, like many schools, theirs emphasized group-work and cooperative learning and minimized competition and individual attainment, they're accustomed, upon entry to college, to sharing the work, not doing it themselves, and not being held accountable by themselves.

Sixth, they've already dosed, if not overdosed, on political correctness, multiculturalism, etc. before they even reach the ivy-covered walls. They learned to be nice, to be sensitive, to be inclusive, not to say anything offensive or provocative. They didn't learn it only from high school, as Mark Edmundson's brilliant *Harper's* essay pointed out. Much of that world view comes from the TV set. But the schools contributed their part.

Seventh, if they went to a typical U.S. high school, they're used to a curricular smorgasbord and probably are unacquainted, or minimally acquainted, with core subjects. They may have taken bachelor living instead of civics, consumer math instead of geometry, multicultural history instead of ancient history, psychology instead of physics. They very likely took some technical, vocational, or "school to work" classes instead of liberal arts. Of course, they had to satisfy certain graduation requirements, but if psychology counts as science and journalism counts as English, why take the real stuff?

Eighth, they are accustomed to mediocre teaching. They may have had a favorite teacher, maybe even a great teacher. There are a number of those among the 2.7 million teachers in the K-12 system. But the odds are that a lot of their teachers were the kinds Rita was talking about: time-servers, not terribly sophisticated about their own fields, and more interested in whether kids are properly entertained, happy, and feeling good rather than in what they actually learn in class.

Ninth, they are not accustomed to consequences. They aren't used to feeling that it matters whether they study hard, learn a lot, and get top marks in hard subjects, because it's just as rewarding to coast along with so-so grades in fluffy courses, They know that results count in some parts of life, for example in sports, but they are not accustomed to thinking that results in academics make a difference.

Tenth, and finally, our young people are thoroughly acquainted, long before they reach the university, with the educational regimen E. D. Hirsch

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calls "romantic naturalism" —a product of Dewey, as everybody has said, and Rousseau, and of the rest of the Teachers College faculty. This is still the reigning educational ideology. We won't spend time today on that "thoughtworld," as Hirsch terms it, and I'm not going to bother documenting its lack of scientific moorings, which are carefully set forth in his wonderful book, *The Schools We Need and Why We Don't Have Them.* Its immediate relevance is that young people are coming out of school thinking that they need to learn what they feel like learning, that their teachers are escorts or facilitators, not instructors, that knowledge is pretty much whatever they'd like it to be, and that their feelings and sentiments are as valid as anything that might be termed successive approximations of objective truth, if indeed there is any such thing as truth.

So, what are the implications of all this for higher education? In a single sentence, our universities have to build a house on top of a cracked and incomplete foundation. How much re-pouring of that foundation does the university then undertake? At what expense? Whose expense? Instead of what? Does the remedial work count for credit? If so, does it subtract from the expected amount of so-called college-level work? Or does it add to the total, thus taking more time and demanding additional resources?

Or does the college give up? Or simply try to do something altogether different, not repairing the foundation but, let's say, pouring a slab and proceeding to build something different on top?

I have my own view of all this, my own form of romantic utopianism. It partakes a little of what Igor said. I think that the colleges should leverage the K-12 system, and initiate the kinds of changes that both systems (and the larger society) would benefit from. The universities should stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the business leaders of this country and say, with a single voice: "Starting X number of years into the future, none of us will admit into our institutions or hire in our workplaces anyone who does not possess the following skills and knowledge, to be tested in the following way." (X years in the future because fair warning is needed before you impose such a regimen.) Nothing would have such a catalytic effect on secondary schools and ultimately on primary schools as such a pronouncement by our universities, especially if they were joined by our employers.

This isn't apt to happen, for the reasons that have been given. Employers would cite legal reasons, civil rights reasons, business reasons. Interest groups and editorialists would talk about violations of equal opportunity. The federal government is certainly too cowardly to take Robert Samuelson's excellent and oft-repeated suggestion and make educational attainment a precondition for student financial aid. As for the colleges, well, I hate to say it, but they need the students worse than they need the standards. So the higher education system is likely to persist with

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its peculiar love-hate relationship with the K-12 system, complaining about that system's products while contributing in myriad ways to keeping those problems unsolved.

Now let me briefly turn the tables and mention five ways in which what's going on in higher education affects the K-12 system for the worse.

Most damaging today is the abandonment of entrance standards. I'm certainly not opposed to everyone having a shot at a college education, nor to the financial aid that makes that economically possible. But I oppose the impact on high school exit standards of the understanding that everyone can go to college. The great tragedy of open admissions is not what it does to the colleges but how it fatally undermines efforts to reform the schools. The late Albert Shanker was particularly eloquent on this point. He said the kids want to know if it counts before they take learning it seriously. And if the whole world is signaling to them that it doesn't really count, that you'll be admitted anyway, that we'll employ you anyway, put yourself in the place of a typical sixteen-year-old on a Tuesday evening, trying to decide whether to stay home and re-work that lab report and get an early start on his history paper, or go out with his friends? Well, sixteen-year-olds, in their own odd way, are rational beings. They go through a kind of rational calculus, asking does it matter, does it count, does it really make any difference? If the real world signals that it doesn't really count, how do you think they're going to spend their evenings? That is what I think the colleges are doing to the schools. They signal that you're welcome even if you didn't learn anything in school.

Second is the ripple effect of the university's intellectual and curricular fashions. Every idea that drips down through the academic limestone eventually creates stalactites within the K-12 system. The postmodern enterprise has infected what's taught in third grade. Where do "fuzzy" math, cooperative learning, whole language reading, and "history from the victim's standpoint" come from? Where did those wretched national history standards come from? From a university campus, of course. Everything that happens in higher education sooner or later makes its way into third grade.

Third is the disaster of teacher training. Keep the numbers in mind: there are upwards of a hundred thousand education degrees a year awarded by U.S. colleges and universities. This is the major source of teachers and school administrators. Most of them are just awful, for the reasons and data I've given. There are a few partial, happy exceptions. I think in deference to our hosts it's worth pointing out that Boston University has something approaching a good school of education, in a desert of good schools of education around the country.

The fourth problem that is trickling from universities into the schools is permissiveness with respect to behavior and morality. If it's taken for

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granted on the college campus that it's fine for eighteen-year-olds to indulge in drugs, sex, rock 'n' roll, binge drinking, class-cutting, oversleeping, and so forth, it's naive to think that seventeen-year-olds on the high school campus won't begin to practice to get ready for their freshman year in college. If the college sophomore in the family boasts about his exploits, what do you suppose will be the effect on his younger sister who is a high school sophomore? What are the effects on parents trying to bring their kids up properly? The signals sent by higher education permeate the signals that make their way into the schools.

Fifth, and finally, the university is the wellspring of the social and political values that pervade the school curriculum, values that today include multiculturalism, environmentalism, ambivalence about patriotism, an affection for big government, and so on. These creep into textbooks, into the videos and television programs that teachers show, into the magazines and newspapers and workbooks they assign, and into the belief structure of the teachers themselves. Indeed, the activist groups on campus that seek to propagate those values throughout the society are especially eager to target the young, and if they can get their hands on the fifth-grade science curriculum, so much the better. That's how something called "peace education" during the cold war evolved into conflict resolution; that's why science and geography classes are awash in radical environmentalism, etc. I don't say that this is solely the fault of our colleges and universities, but if these beliefs weren't firmly rooted there, they wouldn't be nearly so sturdy in our elementary and secondary schools.

If you look at these two systems together, the lower and the higher, what we have is a classic case of entropy—a closed system in which every element slowly deteriorates. Webster's defines "entropy" as "the degradation of the matter and energy in the universe to an ultimate state of inert uniformity." A wonderful description, I think, of the interaction of the K-12 and higher education systems.

Is there anything to be done? I started with my own bits of optimism. There are end runs, there are exceptions, there are situations within this chaos in which good things can and sometimes do happen. There are islands in this polluted sea, and if there were a lot more of them I'd be more optimistic. I think that their existence, however, proves that it's possible, and that's reason enough not to despair. Maybe the mounting discontent we're seeing among governors and legislators will actually lead to some serious intervention. I do not believe that this is a self-correcting system. I don't think an entropic system can self-correct, though I don't know enough science to be sure of that. I do believe that an intervention, a swift kick from outside, is the likeliest way to cause a change in this enterprise. And I hope that *Partisan Review* will deliver such a kick, and that everyone in the room will leave so motivated and so inclined.

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Edith Kurzweil: Thank you very much. Who wants to start the discussion? Michael Meyers.

Michael Meyers: Chester Finn, I was intrigued by your presentation, and agree with 98 percent of it. But about your point that people give legal reasons and civil rights reasons for not doing the right thing. My experience is the exact opposite. They give legal reasons and civil rights reasons to do the wrong thing. I want to ask you about the intersection of standards of academic achievement with self-esteem. You have, for example, the secretary of education, Richard Riley, in the context of single-sex public schools, saying that, if it works, he's for experimentation. Despite legal reasons. Even your colleague and friend, Diane Ravitch, supports single-sex schools notwithstanding questions about legality and civil rights. Black Muslim schools, Afrocentric schools, African-American immersion schools, black male schools, all that is put out in an effort to raise achievement for people who have low self-esteem. Therefore we want to create—when I say "we" I'm giving the argument of people who want to create such schools—schools based around race, around sex, in order to boost self-esteem, and measure this by academic achievement. If race-based schools or single-sex schools "work" in terms of raising academic achievement and standards, they are willing to throw away civil rights concerns, moral concerns, and legal concerns. I want your views about that movement and how that intersects with what you said about the legal reasons for doing the right thing.

Chester Finn: What I was talking about with regard to legal and civil rights reasons on the part of employers had to do with provisions in federal law that make it nearly impossible to use test scores or other achievement scores as criteria for hiring. I was referring to the employment world. But I'll talk about what you brought up. I don't think many of the schools you described are set up primarily to bolster self-esteem, but to boost academic achievement. Be that as it may, I've become a lot more accepting of single-sex, single-race, and single this-and-that schools than I once was, because they work. They attract people for a reason, to a place that has a purpose, a focus, unity, and integrity. Sometimes they're a little distasteful, a little flaky even in terms of their curriculum, or they're teaching kids things I wouldn't want my kids to be taught, but usually they're also teaching reading and writing in a safe environment, with caring teachers. Maybe I expect too little, but I'm pretty pumped up when I see reading and writing and arithmetic being taught by caring teachers, even if some of what else is going on in the school is not something I would generally think highly of.

These are typically schools that reach out to draw in kids and families for a particular reason. My main antidote to their hyper-specialization in

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terms of curriculum is to pair this kind of educational diversity with some kind of core academic standards that all the schools must teach. That is to say, I believe in a system in which the state or the community sets standards that all its schools must attain, and then leaves the schools free both to attain them as they wish and to teach whatever else they wish in addition. That's where the charter school notion comes from. I'm pretty encouraged by that possibility. It's not perfect, and it allows some schools to crop up that I don't like very much. But if parents choose them for their kids, their kids are likely to learn more in that environment than if they had been involuntarily assigned to an unsafe school where nobody cares for them, where they're not likely to learn to read and write, even though it's perfectly integrated along every dimension that social engineers could possibly devise.

Michael Meyers: Then I think there's something wrong with your definition of standards. If you go to a school, an African-American immersion school—a publicly supported school, where the mantra to the students is: "think black, pray black, love black, speak black and be black," there's something wrong, regardless of whatever else they're learning.

Edith Kurzweil: I'd like to add something here. Kurt Scholz should really talk, but he asked me to do so. In Austria they do have single-sex schools, and they have co-ed schools. And we know very well that we abolished these so that parents and children should no longer choose what they prefer. To some extent that is why we have these debates. You weren't here, Michael, when Kurt was talking, but in Austria it's taken for granted that all children are going to the same kind of school, that standards exist for them all, and they all are supposed to live up to the standards.

Sanford Pinsker: I'm Sandy Pinsker, editor of *Academic Questions*. I have a question for Rita and Chester, one I raise on behalf of my wife, the director of an International Baccalaureate program in Lancaster, Pennsylvania that'll be off the ground and running next year. You said a number of kind words about charter schools; I wonder if you had at least one or two kind words about International Baccalaureate programs. When my wife goes out to middle schools to "recruit" or pass the word, the bad news is that students out there apparently have not read *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. The good news is that if you tell them this program isn't for everyone—you've got to be very quick and very disciplined and willing to do lots of hard work—they all say, "Me! Me! I can do it! I'm interested!" Set a challenge to these kids and at least initially they're interested, even though the number of students who will successfully complete the program

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will be few. Not everyone in this program is fit to be in it and will go through it. Rita and Chester, do you have some nice words I can bring home to my wife?

Rita Kramer: Sandy, why don't you explain what an International Baccalaureate program is?

Sanford Pinsker: It's an integrated high school program with standards higher than the normal Advanced Placement courses. When successfully completed, you get one year of college credit. My children were in International Baccalaureate courses when I was a Fulbrighter in Belgium, and I was impressed with the level of work they did there. Am I roughly right, Rita?

Rita Kramer: Well, from my point of view it sounds very much like the program that Robert Maynard Hutchins instituted at the University of Chicago when I was young. It had its shortcomings, but the great thing about it was that it was a program intended to accept any student who could demonstrate certain abilities and would meet certain standards, and you could enter at any point, some of us after two years in high school, and after four years you had a baccalaureate degree. The main thing that Hutchins had to argue against then, given his idea of the university, was football. When you think of what people interested in the pursuit of what we used to call a "liberal education" are up against today, that's an enviable situation. But that kind of education is sorely needed.

Chester Finn: Actually I've never heard a European talk about International Baccalaureate programs, so I'd really be interested to hear if Kurt has any comments on how this plays out in Austria. In the U.S. context, I would term myself a 97-percent fan of them. It's as close as we have to an international gold standard for curricular attainment. It's got an external examining system with very high standards and expectations. I think the IB has an admirable set of academic skills and content for young people to aspire to, and the schools that do it have a purpose, a mission, and a coherence. My 3-percent reservation comes from having skimmed the curriculum, and discovering, at least in the social studies, too high a level of political correctness and one-world soupiness. So I ended up saying that the math, science, and language expectations are terrific, and that the social science expectations are not totally to my taste.

Sanford Pinsker: I'll take 97 percent any day. Could I learn something from Austria?

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Kurt Scholz: The number of Austrian students going to the international universities is quite high. . . .

Sanford Pinsker: No, the international programs at the high school level, in Austria, in international schools.

Kurt Scholz: We have two. The enrollment in those schools is not high; a number of pupils from the international schools go to the public schools, and the standards of the international schools are not higher than those of Austrian schools. The university careers of public school pupils are exactly the same or even better than those of students from international schools. Generally, the international schools present some competition for me, but as long as there is no flight from public schools to international schools I think the public system is doing quite well. But I wonder whether I understood your question.

Edith Kurzweil: I'd like to add something. It seems to me that the International Baccalaureate here is set up in order to improve something, to step outside of public school education. In Europe, the international schools primarily are for the children of foreigners who come to Europe and whose parents may or may not leave these countries in a year or two. So there's a different purpose. Moreover, as Kurt was telling us before, in the public schools in Austria and Germany, and in England, you learn foreign languages as a matter of course. He told us that in some schools you start at the age of six, in most of them maybe at the age of eight or ten. So, there isn't that need that we have here for it. I'd like to add one other thing that for some reason none of us have touched on here, and that is, when our students compete with foreign ones, we find out that they're at the bottom of the ladder. To some extent that may be due to our ethos of being against elites. Even the word "elitism" isn't as central in any other country. We have a fear of being part of an elite. I think we have to let our students know that it's perfectly fine to belong to an elite. How else is the country ever going to be competitive on any level if we don't believe that our students may aspire to excelling? We all have different aspirations and competencies and our most accomplished students should succeed and be able to compete.

Dick Lanham: I'm a physician from New York who came here to put a face to the names of some of the people whose books I enjoy, as I do *Partisan Review*. Other than being an instructor in clinical medical school and teaching mathematics to high school kids who had flunked one summer, I have absolutely no educational experience. Some of my ideas may

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be laughable. However, it seems to me that from the inception of the universities in the late middle ages until the 1960s, kids got an education and then they went on to be trained. When I went through the process it seemed to me that, basically, I was acquiring a vocabulary. In any event, in the Middle Ages the graduate schools, law, medicine, and theology, trained people for specific functions and until the 1960s that's pretty much what happened, although we had business schools and dental schools and so on. Now, when a kid gets out of high school he goes to college in order to be trained. In my day, I thought education was fun. Dr. Finn's sixteen-year-old kid never considered that doing a lab test or starting a history paper was fun. So if that is the culture now, why don't we just make training the first portion of a post-high school education? Ask the kid what he wants to do and train him for it. If he wants to be a potato farmer he would have to learn some mathematics, some writing, etc. Thereby he would get certain basic skills that he would normally get in a more theoretical form. Then we train the kid to do whatever he wants to do. Let's reverse the medieval pattern, and offer him some culture, such as Mozart, and a bit of vocabulary. My second suggestion addresses the other end, the grammar schools: since the grammar school teacher has to be not only a teacher but a parent, a social worker, a doctor, a nurse, a police officer, a nutritionist, and heaven knows what else, why don't we put every grammar school into two building? In the first we'll put teachers who will teach, in the second we'll put all the ancillary services which the poor teacher cannot provide if he or she still hopes to teach.

Rita Kramer: In response, I would like to suggest that you write a grant proposal, and submit it to all the foundations you can think of, and let's give it a try.

Igor Webb: Certainly, many American students are much more ready to learn something after a certain real-world experience that actually engages them. I tried to do this once in partnership with the Long Island Lighting Company. They were very interested in offering a core curriculum to their employees. Since they had a fairly active internal education system, we suggested that it would be interesting to expand it, so that when the guy is taught to fix your boiler, he could also be taught about physics. They were pretty terrified of this idea. But I still think it would be a powerful way of educating people who already have specific skills.

The only caveat to this, and you may hear this tomorrow, is that the "new economy" values the qualities of mind that you get through a liberal arts education, which I'm not sure that you could offer in a context different from the traditional one. But since the expectations of education

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by students, faculties, governors, are changing so drastically, and the confusion of ends in the system is so extreme, it's not clear where it'll end up. Thus your idea is certainly worth trying.

Rita Kramer: On a more serious level, and a more personal one, I think that most of my education has come late in life, long after I left school, in pursuing ideas that would have had very little resonance when I was young. But, on the other hand, I don't think I could have done that without what Hutchins College did for me, which was a little like this baccalaureate program. It gave me a vocabulary to build on later, a frame of reference.

Harry Stein: I'm an administrator in a very small high school district in New Jersey; I also teach the first period of each day. I want to make a plea and an argument to Rita Kramer, Dr. Finn, and to Dr. Webb, and then a highly technical point to Dr. Scholz. After many years of work with the state commissioner of education in New Jersey, after working in Africa, and in local school districts, I plead with you to shift your focus from what is happening at the amorphous national or state level, and focus on what is happening at the micro level. There are sixteen thousand high schools in the United States. Over ten thousand school districts, all of them concerned with their own children. I am concerned with the 1,780 children in my school district. National reports are meaningless to me. So are state reports. For example, when we recruit teachers in my school district we are practicing many of the end runs that you, Rita, talk about. We are looking for teachers of social studies who have MBAs, who have worked on Wall Street. There are many experiences within public schools at the micro level that are largely invisible. We are looking at retired people with doctorates, without experience in education. We have the administrative and legal capacity to get them through the system. In short, many good things are happening at the micro level, and it's very difficult for national or state policy advocates to get to that level. Your beliefs, which are mine, can best be transmitted and understood by decision-makers at the micro level. Could you in some way find the time, the energy, the money, to get to the micro level, just as Chester did in going to the middle school here, and then communicate it, because the national and state studies do not affect our behavior? The macro level is best served by the aggregation of micro experiences that are coming out of very traditional school systems, whose only interests are highly introverted. I would invite your comments.

Rita Kramer: Are you able to do this, to make your end run, because of New Jersey's alternate certification program?

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Harry Stein: And my own skills, and the support of my board. It's possible. It's not a desert out there, though it looks like one. As we know, there is no American educational system, and no state systems. They're just words at the state level. They're counteracted by local politicians who refuse to let states validate what's going on. I think we can get better guidelines outside charter movements.

Chester Finn: Well, yes and no. I go to many schools, and occasionally you see wonderful things. But the question is, what would cause these wonderful things to go on in more places? There are about 110,000 schools in this country. Let's stipulate that five or ten thousand of them are doing wonderful things. That leaves us with a mere ninety thousand to worry about. What will induce change in the ninety thousand that are not doing good things today? Following your recipe, we would have to presume that they would change if only they were presented with examples that would enable them to visualize change, that the will, the power, the desire, the impulse, the autonomy are there, and the smarts are there. They would change if only they were informed about what better might look like. Would that this were true. I don't have high hopes for bad schools. I don't believe that their leadership, their savvy, their freedom, their capacity to change are great enough that mere information will induce change. It will on the margin, sure. But if you want to change ninety thousand schools, or whatever number you want to pick, that won't do the trick. I think they need to be shoved, either by the marketplace or by a higher authority. That's why I think that state standards and state accountability systems actually make a difference. This is most evident today in Texas, with the nation's most draconian top-down accountability system: there, state standards and tests are actually causing scores to rise. I don't think that would be happening otherwise.

Victor Kestenbaum: I'm in the department of philosophy and in the school of education. Some of your generalizations regarding John Dewey seem to me to be odd, and simply contrary to what one would take to be a responsible interpretation of Dewey. For example, do you know of anyone in American intellectual thought, in American intellectual history, who did more to try to advance the cause of reason? The way in which you dismiss Dewey is unacceptable. Now, I understand that this is not a conference on American philosophy. But I'm interested in, for example, how to make sense of, let's say, Bill Arrowsmith. Hardly a romantic naturalist; saying what matters is the integration of significant life and knowledge, of compassionate study and informed conduct. That sounds very much like Dewey. Sidney Hook was not a romantic naturalist; he was a naturalist in criticizing Allen Bloom's book, *The Closing of the American*

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Mind. He said the "difficulty of Bloom's position is that, like Leo Strauss, he has not emancipated himself from the Greek notion that the cosmos is also an ethos and that what is good and bad, right and wrong for man is essentially related to the cosmic order, rather than to the choices of men and women confronted by problems and what to do." Finally, Michael Oakeshott, not a romantic naturalist, in his great essay, "Learning and Teaching," says, "But this inheritance is an historic achievement. It is positive and not necessary." Frankly I know of no American philosopher who was as clear about the contingency of the inheritance and the importance of it in American education.

Rita Kramer: Well, perhaps I should have taken greater pains to say the followers of Dewey, who, like the followers of Freud, the followers of Maria Montessori, the followers of many thinkers, have done more harm than good in the name of those they profess to follow. It certainly is so in the philosophy of progressive education, the child-centered school, as taught at Columbia Teacher's College, that has wreaked as much havoc in American classrooms as anything I can think of, including all other social, economic, intellectual ventures. I do not dispute the important place of Dewey in American philosophy but the influence of those who profess to be his followers has been very destructive.

Victor Kestenbaum: I have heard that so often. I have heard it from Diane Ravitch, my former colleague Roger Scruton, Paul Gagnon, and so forth. The argument usually is that Dewey's writings are so obscure, so dense, and so ambiguous, that he virtually invited misinterpretation by his "followers." Without some close analysis of Dewey's educational writings, the superficial condemnations and exonerations of Dewey will continue to be the extent to which his thinking is included in foundational thinking about educational reform. When someone like Jacques Barzun tells us that the nonsense did not begin with James or Dewey, I pay attention because we see in his wonderful book, *A Stroll with William James*, that Barzun knows a thing or two about James and has a "feel" for the more elusive aspects of James. Perhaps someone will write a similar book about Dewey.

Chester Finn: I certainly don't expect to do justice to a philosopher talking about Dewey. And I plead guilty to gross oversimplification. However, it needs to be said that Dewey is to educational thought as the *Encyclopedia Britannica* is to knowledge. There is almost no educational thought that you cannot find somewhere in the writings of Dewey. He wrote on many topics, he modified, adapted, evolved his views. A number of his writings are sufficiently inscrutable that they are open to more than one interpretation as well. The central point is that Dewey's followers at Teacher's College,

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William Heard Kilpatrick premier among them, had enormous influence on American education. And in the two classic strands of American educational thought, the so-called piliocentric and scoliocentric views do we shape the child to the school or the school to the child? The notion that we shape the school to the child had its roots there. And those were people who had studied with Dewey and some of the writings of Dewey.

Victor Kestenbaum: But things that have been found in Kant, in Hegel, in Plato, in Aristotle, range from the sublime to the horrible as well.

Rita Kramer: But they have not had very much influence, unfortunately, or should I say fortunately, depending on your point of view, in the American classroom. Whereas the followers of Dewey certainly have.

Victor Kestenbaum: We may be in bigger trouble if Plato has not had an impact on our classroom.

Rita Kramer: I said fortunately or unfortunately.

Edith Kurzweil: I'm afraid we won't solve that problem right now.

Linda Wells: I've been a faculty member at Boston University since 1980. I began my career as a high school English teacher. I had four fairly awful education classes and then did student teaching, so I have a variety of views on the matter of education. I teach in a core curriculum program, and I'm very concerned about standards. I also have a child with Down Syndrome and two bilingual kids from Mexico, so I know some issues from the parent's point of view. We all have various ways of articulating the problems of the public schools, and it's difficult to offer solutions or suggestions as to what might improve them. About five years ago I participated in the nationwide initiative of the American Council of Learned Societies, to try to get colleges and universities to commit themselves to K-12 education. Not schools of education, but people in the disciplines. I'm in the humanities and have continued this effort, but we have a tendency to dissociate ourselves from K-12 teachers, to say that we are not involved in the same enterprise. As to improving standards in the disciplines, one way might be to have people who are in higher education,mathematicians for example, connect with K-12 teachers. I continue to do seminars, and I hope these are more of the kind of the Italian Renaissance and not about pedagogy. If colleges and universities, city by city, local area by area, could involve themselves in these kinds of efforts, we would improve standards throughout the country. So, my suggestion would be to start many more initiatives for K-12 teachers linked with teachers in higher education.

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Rita Kramer: Yes. At the time I wrote the ed school book, and spent so much time in classrooms, it occurred to me that the natural solution was to put college and university faculty with teachers in the grassroots communities. This would be very acceptable to local schools. Unfortunately, you are an exception. Most college and university members aren't interested in spending any of their precious time doing that sort of thing. They have pressures on them, to publish, to do all the things you have to do to get tenure. There is no money, no prestige, in this for them. This idea is like other wonderful ideas, but would be very hard to get off the ground.

Linda Wells: Initially the American Council of Learned Societies invested a lot of money in this effort. It has been picked up in about fifteen districts in the Boston area that will give their teachers release time. College faculty might not spend a full semester at it. Most teachers have been amazingly receptive, and this is a way to get them back to the life of the mind and the life of scholarship. It's just going to take some creative thinking about how to finance it.

Rita Kramer: Exactly. I think it's a wonderful idea.

Igor Webb: Well, it's not altogether a wonderful idea, if you think about what things are happening in the universities. It's not a simple matter of connection. Yes, colleges should work with a consortia of schools, but it is only really fruitful if a university professor has some useful thoughts about education and understands his role in something larger than his discipline or sub-discipline. Otherwise what you get is not only incoherence, but condescension on the part of the university professor to the high school teacher and to that task. There is nothing to suggest, in my experience, that the university professor, as a generic quantity, is fit to be helpful, indiscriminately, in the high school classroom, to the high school teacher.

Linda Wells: I'd like to take issue with you, and to say that I'd be satisfied with crumbs! If, for instance, a high school teacher in the average suburban or inner-city high school of what is now called "Language Arts"—and has nothing to do with language and nothing to do with art—could spend a few hours being introduced to the nineteenth-century novel, for example, or to the ideas about the relationship between domestic arrangements and the social and political constructs of the period, it would help.

Chester Finn: But why do you think that's what's going to happen when the English professor meets with the high school teacher? It's just as likely not to happen. That's the rub.

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Igor Webb: You also have to remember that college professors never were exposed to thinking about education itself. In my Ph.D. training, in English at Stanford, a little time was spent on it. But for the most part there's no conversation in graduate school, for example, about how to construct a meaningful curriculum. And yet the beginning professor is assumed to be an expert on education and on the curriculum. It is expected that this person automatically will be helpful. The people who can actually be helpful need to have a sense of the institutional role they're serving, to be helpful in the high school classroom in the way that you're talking about it.

Rita Kramer: I'm talking from fantasy, and you're talking from experience, so I defer to you.

Igor Webb: Don't do it that quickly.

Chester Finn: I share some of Igor's ambivalence. When well done, this can be a wonderful experience. Arguably the most stimulating teaching experience that I ever took part in was a three-week summer institute on the university campus designed for high school principals to learn about leadership via the humanities. They came from four different disciplines. We selected half a dozen works of the humanities that evoked leadership in various ways, and this produced an unbelievably exciting intellectual rejuvenation for thirty or so high school principals from around the country. Everybody benefitted. But does exposing the average teacher to the author of the typical paper delivered at the Modern Language Association meeting, or an historical association conference? What are the odds that this will lead to a better rather than possibly worse elementary school system?

Linda Wells: Well, then that's the level of teaching that goes on in universities as well. I think that people in higher education can be catalysts for scholarly development in teachers. I have seen public school teachers who are arid, not because they don't have the intellectual capabilities but because they don't have the space and the opportunity. I've seen individuals take a seminar in the humanities and then go on to develop their own scholarship. So my concern is that we don't just reduce it to: "Higher education has no knowledge of what goes on in the public schools."

Peter Wood: I'm an administrator at Boston University, and as Chester mentioned I'll be speaking on pretty much the same issue that Rita, Chester, and Igor were talking about, that is if I can figure out something different to say, now that they've stolen all my best lines. But I would like to take advantage of a pretty rare opportunity to ask some questions that

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will help me and I think others better understand some of the effects of scale of higher education by addressing Kurt Scholz on the issue of just how many graduates of the Austrian secondary system go on to university in Austria, or abroad, and what percentage do not go on to university. Is there a post-secondary education for people moving into other walks of life? Does the Austrian system have enough flexibility built into it to offer a reasonable preparation for life and for careers with a non-university orientation?

Kurt Scholz: Three attempts to answer your and others' questions, and one short story. First: about 70 percent of our high school pupils go on to university or to academies. But our schools are very selective. Pupils face the problems in the school system, not that much in the university. This is the reason why in Austria the universities still don't have anything like entrance examinations, they simply rely on the school system, which in my mind is a big compliment to that system. From the moment universities were to start a conversation about entrance examinations all the alarm clocks would be ringing. Second: I didn't quote Dewey twice by chance. Of course he was wrong in some of his writings. Third: I never felt easy about overall statistics of educational levels, and I never felt easy about government agencies, universities, think tanks, or quick value judgements about schools. These organizations are not so quick when it comes to helping schools. What you often experience is a slap on the shoulder, "Go on. You're marvelous. I won't help you." So school developments at the micro level, what I've seen in the U.S., sometimes are very impressive even under very poor circumstances. I don't believe in the grand plan of educational reform anymore. I think the efforts on the so-called micro level are the future and must be supported.

Now the story: it's almost impossible to compare school standards, but I would like to tell you an unofficial story, although I wonder how it could remain unofficial in front of the camera. I have been in my office now for over six years, which is traditional, and I'm the sixth president in this century. In the last ten years I've seen six school chancellors in New York. In my second year in office I got a call from the then-U.S. ambassador to Austria, who told me she had a boy who's seven, and she wanted a school for him. I said, "Your boy goes to the American school in Vienna." "Yes, but I don't want to leave him in that school. I want him to go to an Austrian school, but he doesn't speak any German," she told me. "It's no problem, he will learn it," I said, "but you as an ambassador, are you allowed to take your boy out of the American school and put him in an Austrian school? You're not a millionaire, you're a multi-millionaire, you could afford any school with all the dozens of brilliant teachers from the university." I wasn't excited about this idea for reasons of security. But she

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insisted. So I found an ordinary public school in Vienna. The boy did very well. It was a public school nearby, where a prominent social-democratic politician just had decided to pull out his child from that school and put him in a parochial school because the standards in the school didn't seem high enough for him. I don't want to draw too many conclusions from this story, but you might understand why I like it.

Gabrielle Weinberger: I'm an associate professor at a private college in North Carolina. I teach both in the English and in the German departments. Part of my education was in Europe, and part in the U.S. I teach the freshmen English as if it were at the high school level, partially doing what you were suggesting. But I don't think that fixes the problem. Teachers in Austria, to my knowledge, all have a master's level education in the field they're teaching, which is very important. As Rita Kramer said, the competency of the teacher in the field he or she is teaching is crucial to our success. And I don't believe transplanting some well-meaning college teachers will change our system.

Donald Keaney: I'd like to raise the issue of the racial questions involved in this, of education, of multiculturalism. I don't think these questions can be moved in a positive direction unless white people have a strong racial conciousness as a means of defending their culture, their civilization. I also wonder how this kind of abstract universalism that so many people believe in is actually a belief system that facilitates and enables the particularisms of minorities. It actually doesn't work toward any benign universalism but facilitates particularism, racial and ethnic conciousness.

Kurt Scholz: I think if we want to live together in one society we should design a school system in which the art of living together is part of the system. I would refuse to divide my school system into different contradicting ones. My philosophy is to give as much assistance as possible to all the children coming, mostly from Eastern Europe, into Austria. But their cultural identity has to be preserved by cultural institutions, libraries, and so on. I do not want to split up my school system into different, small, conflicting school systems because I think this would endanger my main goal of teaching the art of peacefully living together. I know that this is one point of view and there are others, legitimate ones, too. But this is mine.

Donald Keaney: I think the Austrian situation sounds different. If you're dealing mostly with immigrants who are from eastern Europe you're dealing with much less heterogeneity, with people from a Western European context. In the United States you're dealing with people from different races, from other parts of the world, a much greater

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element of heterogeneity, so that the problems here are much more severe.

Kurt Scholz: I would agree with you, but there is also a small minority of Chinese and Southeast Asian children in our schools and they have absolutely no difficulty adapting to our school system. They are often the most brilliant students.

Edith Kurzweil: We're going to talk about this issue tomorrow; there's a whole panel about it and maybe you can come. However, I think all of that has to do with the way our system is structured, and that's precisely what we're trying to discuss here. Maybe we could restructure?

Linda Sartorelli: Chester Finn, you described quite accurately, ten characteristics of American students as they come to colleges and universities: they don't study hard, they're always told they do well, etc. As a faculty member who confronts these students on a day-to-day basis what advice could you give me?

Chester Finn: Bill Bennett always gets out of those kinds of questions by saying, "I don't do retail." I'm going to have to give a variation on that answer. I don't have good advice for how to deal with this problem at the micro level. I think it is a systemic problem, a structural problem, and I think it needs structural solutions. There are many teachers in the K-12 system who triumph over the bizarre situations there. You could go see the movie "Stand and Deliver," about a great teacher who triumphs over adversity and manages to teach his students calculcus. There's a movie waiting to be made about a college professor who does for entering freshmen what Escalante did for these high school kids.

Rita Kramer: Well, in the interest of full disclosure I have to tell you I am not a teacher. I have no classroom experience except as an observer. But I would suggest to you something I would call the "Corn Is Green" phenomenon, the movie in which Bette Davis played a teacher in Wales and Evelyn Williams was her pupil. In a sea of unresponsive young people, she found a young man whose genius she was able to nurture, and her satisfaction late in life was knowing she had sent at least one person out into the world better-prepared than he would have been without her. So, lots of luck.

Harry Stein: Please do retail because you could help me with a problem I face Monday morning. I'm a follower of Tip O'Neill from across the

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river, who said that all politics begin with the house and the neighborhood. I believe that all discussion about school reform also begins there. Perhaps, Chester, it doesn't end there. The state is requiring that elementary school children in all grades receive instruction and competence in world language. K-8 feeds my school district, a high school district, and the elementary school districts are completely independent of me. They have their own boards. This state mandate that is to be implemented in two years, but I must plan for it now.

To Dr. Scholz. In the elementary districts that feed my high school, language instruction begins in grades 6, 7, and 8: French, German, Latin, Spanish. There is no language instruction K-5. No instruction whatsoever in world languages. First, which language do we focus on for the children in K-5? How many languages? These children are all highly homogeneous, in class, race, and ethnicity. Secondly, do I use language specialists who now teach grades 6, 7, and 8 in K-5, hire more of them, or can I use the elementary-trained teachers, not trained in world languages, to teach world languages? At the micro level these questions are bedeviling all of the New Jersey school districts trying to figure out how to teach world languages K-5 when there are no more language programs.

Kurt Scholz: There are some things in the U.S. educational debate that I never understood. I do not want to sound morally superior; no country or school system is morally superior to any other. But when your second educational president announces that his main goal is that by the end of the third school year every U.S. child should be able to read and to write and to have the basic mathematical skills, forgive me for saying that in the German-speaking school systems, it takes ninety-something percent of the children three months to learn to write and to read, to write in two different styles. There are some things I never understood in the U.S. debates. Three years for the basics, from a European point of view, that's incredible. As far as the early acquisition of a foreign language is concerned, the situation in Austria is much easier, because our second language is the present world language, which is English. So we don't have any problem there. As said before, some 60 percent of Viennese children start with English at the age of six. They do not speak English very well but almost 100 percent start to understand English at the age of eight. So this is much easier in Europe than in the United States.

Igor Webb: Consequently, the problem I think you're going to face is that, for most Americans, the notion of studying another language is abstract. It's an abstract good thing to do, it's not a real good thing to do, because actually you don't need to speak any other language since *the* international

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language is English. It's obvious in Europe that you need to speak many languages with people who are right next to you. It happens as a matter of course there. Here it's not going to happen as a matter of course; it's going to be an abstract good thing. So the only thing I can think of to be helpful to you is to suggest you try to select a second language that in some way has a "natural" or "organic" connection for the students in your district.

Edith Kurzweil: I partly disagree with Igor. Now that American kids love to travel, this might help inspire them, since they don't get that much out of it without speaking some of the country's language. A few months ago, I wrote a letter to the *New York Times*, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, suggesting we go along with the New York State Board of Regents and offset the cost of foreign language education by switching bilingual teachers to teach their languages. That way it wouldn't add costs.

Chester Finn: It's not difficult to teach small children two languages. They're marvelously absorptive and retentive and plastic at this age, and five- or six-year-olds actually learn more easily than fifteen- or sixteen-year-olds. Some of the most exciting schools in America are so-called bilingual immersion schools, where teachers who speak two languages read to the kids in two languages. The kids learn to read and speak in two languages. By the time they are in fourth grade, they are completely bilingual. It's not difficult to do, but Igor's political point is right. Persuading Americans that they for some reason need to learn another language is next to impossible. There is no ultimately persuasive rationale to convince the typical American parent that it's essential to speak another language. Even in the Tokyo subway system you can eventually find the signs in English, though it sometimes takes a while to find them. New Jersey's academic standards are notoriously vague in all subjects, among the country's vaguest and least actionable, and it sounds to me like you're embarking on yet another nebulous, dreamy academic standard promulgated from Trenton. My only advice is don't try to turn a primary teacher into a foreign language teacher. They're already having trouble enough learning how to teach English reading, and that's what they should be concentrating on.

Rita Kramer: Well, since you've told us you're able to circumvent rules and regulations, can't you get a native speaker into the classroom, a French speaker, a German speaker, a Spanish speaker, who likes children and could converse with them?

Speaker: What Rita Kramer just said is important; there are people who successfully teach on the elementary level. I think we need to stop giving

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our children the message that it's not essential to learn the language, that they will be able to read that subway sign in Tokyo. But is that all we want them to do? Don't they need to acquire real skills and be able to do business in Japan? You can't do that with a few words in Japanese. Part of the problem of course lies in the media but my dean also says that they can learn French or German or English later on.

Edith Kurzweil: One last comment and then it's time for lunch.

Sandra Stotsky: I'm a research associate at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. I've also been involved with the English Language Arts standards in the state of Massachusetts. New Jersey and Massachusetts, to my knowledge, are the only two states in the country that have mandated bilingual education from K on. This was not an academic decision, but a political one. No money was allocated by the legislature for this K-12 second language, this "world language," which is a misnomer to begin with. Everyone knows that the world language is English, and yet in both the Massachusetts and I think the New Jersey document everything but English is a world language.

Also, we do not have the courses worked out in twelve-year sequences. We did have a program called "FLES," Foreign Language in the Elementary School, many years ago, which went to pieces after about six to ten years because in the first six years, in elementary school, you had only games, songs, and greetings, and other artificial stuff. And in the typical secondary school, there was no academic sequence. The real issue is that the politicians have not made the public aware of the related issues, the problem of resources in getting any language sequence established. For instance, what will happen to Latin, French, or the other languages, if Spanish will be taught in the American public school system, beginning in kindergarten? That is the fear among many assistant superintendents.

Edith Kurzweil: Thank you very much. We'll continue after lunch.

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Session II: The Core Curriculum as Intellectual Motivation

Igor Webb: I'm going to chair this afternoon's panel, which is on the core curriculum as intellectual motivation. The names of the speakers, I'm sure, are familiar to all of you: C. Vann Woodward, the greatest historian of the American South; Steven Marcus, a distinguished literary scholar and most recently editor of *Medicine in Western Civilization*; Jerry Martin, formerly head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, who incidentally asked me to say that he has changed the title of his paper to "All Worth Preserving," a quotation from Eudora Welty; and the associate provost and chief of staff of Boston University, Peter Wood. So without further ado, Professor Woodward.

C. Vann Woodward: This afternoon I will talk largely about history in the universities of America, and what's happened to it as a discipline. To describe the current standing of the discipline of history in American higher education toward the end of the present century requires some comparisons with other periods in the past. Some thirty years ago, in an address to the American Historical Association (it was published in 1969, delivered in 1968), I attempted an assessment of the status of history in the academy at the end of the 1960s. My purpose here is to find what happened to the study of history in America during the last three decades. In doing so, I realize that some of the things I say are applicable to other disciplines in the humanities, and not entirely exclusive to this country.

Back in 1969 I suggested that the profession of history had enjoyed decades of remarkable prosperity—it might be called a boom period—since the Second World War. While pointing out that booms do not last forever, I admitted that in terms of student enrollment, faculty salaries, and royalty checks, the ancient craft seemed to be thriving. More important, historians appeared to have recovered from the disdain that the relativists and social scientists expressed for their claims on objectivity. Among philosophers, theorists, and logicians, history in those years had won outspoken defenders and champions in quarrels with its critics. The membership of the American Historical Association tripled between 1950 and 1965, and so did the number of history titles published in the United States. Most significant for the strength of history was student patronage, most measurable at least. From 1953 to 1968 the percentage of degrees granted in history in the colleges of the country nearly doubled, gaining more than any other of the humanities disciplines.

In spite of that recent boom, I nevertheless felt obliged in 1969 to report evidence of a coming crisis and decline. The evidence came from three sources. From the academy came news of heavy losses during the last two years in history course enrollment in prominent universities, for example ranging from 27 percent to 34 percent at Harvard, Yale, Stanford,

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and Amherst, and substantial decline in many universities of high quality throughout the country. In student parlance of that generation the word "relevance" was a key word, and history seemed to rank high in "irrelevance." More disturbing was the anti-history animus that was voiced in the intellectual community. Long a source of friendly support for the discipline, philosophers, critics, and men of letters of the 1960s were saying that history as currently written and practiced was bland, banal, and intellectually insipid. Even among professional historians, a few of whom kept up with intellectual controversy of the time, there were some who conceded that change in a "post-industrial" era was so rapid and extensive as to give the past and history less and less meaning for the present.

Those historians who rejected my pessimistic outlook and predictions in 1969 delighted in pointing out that the number of history degrees awarded in this country in the following year, in 1970-71, instead of declining actually increased to "the highest" number ever: some 44,663 degrees were awarded, and this on top of unprecedented increases in the previous eighteen years. But the decline of history I predicted began to be registered in crude terms by the number of degrees awarded in the very next year, 1971-72, and that decline continued with precipitant annual drops for the next fifteen years—down, down, and down year after year. In fact beginning in 1971 with 44,000, it declined to 16,049 in 1984-1985, the lowest number since 1961-1962—a loss of 28,614 from the record high of 1970-71. Yet these were years of great national increase in total college enrollment and in degrees awarded, so that as a percentage of those degrees the decline in absolute numbers I have is much less impressive than the decline of the percentage of degrees, which fell from 5.3 percent in 1970-71 to 1.7 percent of the total fifteen years later.

Undergraduate enrollment and degrees in the discipline began a remarkable recovery in a few outstanding American universities in the 1980s. That gave the American Historical Association newsletter of 1988 "reason for optimism," but it nevertheless admitted that "the discipline is far from recovering its losses," and that "full recovery remains a distant goal." The discipline is in trouble elsewhere as well. In France, for instance, according to Professor Christophe Prochasson of Paris, history is now "losing the prestige it acquired, for good or ill, in the 1970s" and "no longer retains its former splendor."

The number of doctoral degrees awarded in American universities declined sharply also, by more than 50 percent, but not fast enough to avoid serious unemployment of the recipients. Another official report of the American Historical Association in the fall of 1997 reports, "The proportion of Ph.Ds employed in four-year colleges and universities fell to its

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lowest level [some 64.4 percent of the total] on record [in 1995], well behind other humanities fields."

While undergraduate whims and job market fluctuations have practical implications for history faculties, they are hardly the most reliable or significant indicators of status and prestige of the discipline in the intellectual community. Outstanding and outspoken in that world at the time, and highly influential for the last three decades have been various schools of European theorists bearing such names as postmodernists, poststructuralists, and deconstructionists. They often wrote a rather strange and baffling prose, so obscure as likely to appear to some profound, even if inconsistent and self-contradictory at times. Prominent among the leaders were the French theorists Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. Hayden White, an American, might be called a disciple. I refer to them collectively as the "postmodernists."

In so far as the postmodernists dealt with history, and they all did to some extent, they took a negative and dismissive position, almost an anti-history position. Relativists all, they found no place for truth or objective knowledge, but everything relative to the persons or the time or the culture professing them. Since there were no "actual" events, "real" characters, or "objective" truth, history was not something learned or discovered but something made and invented. It belongs with such categories as fiction, parable, and propaganda, and can claim no more authenticity than fiction. History for them reflects the time written, not the time written about. For the postmodernists the terms "positivist" and "objectivist" become pejorative epithets.

The Australian historian Keith Windschuttle, who has written a spirited defense of the discipline and an attack upon the postmodernists and their followers, entitles his book *The Killing of History*. It is his view that "if historians allow themselves to be prodded all the way to this theoretical abyss, they will be rendering themselves and their discipline extinct." He does point out that the influence of French intellectuals, particularly Foucault, Derrida, and Jacques Lacan, have suffered recent embarrassment and decline of influence in part at least because of revelations about one of their masters, Martin Heidegger. Documents came to light revealing Heidegger to have been a Nazi informer against his academic colleagues in the 1930s, a member and strong supporter of the Nazi Party from 1933 to 1945, and an anti-Semite who privately deplored the fall of the Nazi regime until his death in 1976. Among other embarrassments of the sort was the case of Paul de Man. After he had migrated to the United States and later became a professor at Yale it was discovered that, during the German occupation of Belgium, de Man had been a Nazi collaborator who denounced Jewish "pollution" of culture and demanded the deportation of all Jews from Europe.

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Both ex-Nazis and ex-Communists had been utopians of the sort who believed that the revolutionary ends they sought justified any means they used to seek them and to realize them. First the Nazis and then the Communists suffered the failure and collapse of their dreams, and with them the end of history as they could define it and interpret it, which was an heroic struggle for the achievement of their utopias. After that struggle was defeated or abandoned, written history for them became nothing more than the ideological defense or expression of the prevailing cultural system, written by its academic servants, who were grubbing away endlessly in archives for what they called "facts," devoid of any theoretical approach or ennobling purpose.

And so we come to the "end of history," when history reaches a "vanishing point" and we live in the era of "postmodernism" or "posthistory." It is tempting to speculate what European theorists of such conflicting schools as Communists and Nazis have in common that might bring their thinking together in opposition to traditional narrative history, the oldest of humanities disciplines. One speculation, and it is only that, is that it is possibly something in their own pasts, into which they would not welcome scrupulous historical investigation. But that of course is a speculation not susceptible to historic proof.

Few historians in the American academy pretended to keep up with the outpourings of the postmodernists or their successors, even with the parts bearing directly upon their own discipline. For the most part they went about the traditional work of research, with some internal controversy about methodology perhaps, but with little or no sense of threat or menace by the theorists and postmodernists. Nevertheless the influence, theories, and attitudes of European origins did come to be felt in various ways by history and its place in the academy, here and some places abroad. The usual agents of the transmission, however, were not historians but the molders and shapers of educational fashions who persuaded administrators of what, for the time being, is correct in the way of a curriculum. Currently in vogue is relativism about truth and knowledge, and out of vogue are traditions and rules of academic disciplines.

One effect upon history is the disfavor that has fallen upon courses defined chronologically and geographically with boundaries—from, to, and where. More in vogue are courses identified as "studies." Thus the proliferation of offerings such as "peace studies," "race studies," "black studies," "gender studies," "media studies," "shopping mart studies," with emphasis on the present and its concerns and problems. Studies of great popularity may gain status of a department even, or they may be placed in existing departments and become colonizers of such departments. The colonization of old history departments by such invading "studies" is in many cases transforming the traditional curriculum.

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Prominent among the curricular innovations inspired by the postmodernists is "cultural studies" (invariably used as a singular noun by the exponents). The movement as far as I can see originated in Britain among young leftists of the 1980s and then spread rapidly elsewhere, particularly to America and Australia. An international conference on "Cultural Studies" at the University of Illinois in 1990 attracted over nine hundred people. They published a volume of eight hundred pages of papers there delivered and the discussions of them. The book is entitled *Cultural Studies*, though without agreeing upon a definition of culture or "cultural studies." A delegate from Australia did say, "I do not think cultural studies is or ever has been definable as a specifically national tradition or as a school of thought." It was made clear, however, that the cultures studied were primarily of the present and were contemporary, largely popular culture: film, television, radio, tabloids, and popular music, along with Aboriginal, Latino, and Afrocentric studies. The subjects included appeared to be virtually without limit. In the words of ardent proponents, speaking for the whole movement in this volume I referred to, "Cultural studies entails the study of all relations between all elements in a whole way of life." It follows that "Cultural studies is thus committed to study the entire range of societies, arts, beliefs, institutions, and communicative practices." This would seem to render the old question, "What is your field of specialization?" quite obsolete.

The field of history takes the worst beating. We are assured that "there is nothing deader and colder than old history," and that history is "the most unstable" and "the most impermanent of written forms," that there is no distinction between history and fiction, and that aside from the imagination there is no access to the past whatsoever. History suffers the most severe assault, but it is not the only discipline under fire from cultural studies. In fact we are assured by the theorists of cultural studies that they are "actively and aggressively anti-disciplinary" and that this "more or less ensures a permanently uncomfortable relation to academic disciplines." And yet the radicals among the cultural studies seem to have made themselves quite at home and comfortable in the modern academy. The new type of political defiance is almost invariably in the name of some good cause, which, given modern assumptions, are held in favor. As two astute observers have pointed out, "It is radicalism without risk. It does not endanger careers but rather advances them."

I am of course aware that radicals in cultural studies and their postmodern precursors are by no means the only causes for the decline that history and some of the other humanities have suffered in the academy in the last few years. I focus upon them here because the subject under discussion is education in Europe and America, both of which share some of these concerns. But a more important reason is my conviction that unless

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we of the academy, here and abroad, muster the courage and find effective means to counter these forces, we face a shabby end to the discipline we have served and to any system of education that we can respect.

Steven Marcus: Those intellectual pursuits and academic organizations that we think of as constituting the humanities are sustaining today in the United States a course of change that is in consonance with their history. The idea of the humanities, in point of fact, has altered in meaning at least twice and possibly three times during the processes of intellectual, social, cultural, and educational developments that took place, initially (and at a limited number of sites) between about 1880 and 1935, and thereafter throughout the American system of higher education as a whole, and once again during the last two decades.

These alterations are to be understood in the first instance as parts of the evolution of the American university and college system beginning after the end of the Civil War and accelerating steadily as the century ended. At the macro-level of ideal-typical structure these institutions may now be understood as having borrowed something from each of the three great European systems. From the nineteenth century German universities it adapted Humboldt's animating conception of dedication to original research, combined (often secondarily) with instruction. From Oxford and Cambridge, it secured the notion of the undergraduate residential college, in which teaching included, ideally, educating the social and elevating the moral character of privileged young men, and where, in a community of learning, community often counted for as much if not more than learning. And from the universities of France, it imported notions of training young, middle-class men to be officials of the state and servants of society—land grant colleges, state universities, and some normal schools, took over functions and responsibilities that bore upon the formation of middle and upper-middle level elites at state, regional, and occasionally national levels.

This three-part system that began evolving in the latter half of the nineteenth century combined in a spectrum of configurations a hierarchy of undergraduate colleges, graduate research schools and institutes, and technical training centers. Its fully developed form, attained in the second half of the twentieth century, is most distinctly visible in the pyramidal system of institutional distinctions and interchanges that occur between and among the different elements of, say, the California state system of post-secondary education.

This structure did not exist a century or more ago, when the narrative with which I am concerned began to take shape. Many of the institutions of higher education themselves were historically derived from religious

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foundations and served, among other things, to reproduce specific social and cultural governing groups. The sources making for internal structural change were multiple in their originating impetus. Prominent among them was the intractably growing importance, in almost every conceivable sense, of natural science. It was literally modifying the shape of the world intellectually and materially. And spiritually as well, with a proviso which was at the same time a kind of hitch. It was at best morally neutral, at worst morally subversive, and for the most part morally indifferent. There were also the increasingly secular character of American institutional, civic, and cultural life and the pragmatic demands made by a boisterous national economy and a clamorous society. In addition, as a substantial corollary to such alterations in practical existence, there was undeniable general decline in the intellectual authority of religion. There existed, therefore, a widely felt need for some secular substitute for the religion-based moral education that had heretofore been a central ideological charge and responsibility of institutions. First, the classics requirement as part of the qualification for entrance into the more established undergraduate colleges began to erode. Second, required courses at the lower collegiate level in Greek and Latin began to be weakened and to fall away. Third, there was a similar decline in the teaching of what was called "moral philosophy." Traditionally, this course had been a capstone requirement for graduating seniors, and usually was taught by the president of the college, who in the past, frequently been a clergyman. And third, as a consequence in the last quarter of the century of a new undergraduate curriculum, the course of study was based more on the idea of free electives than on a prescribed sequence of courses or even of a distribution among a group of stipulated fields.

What we think of today as the humanities—the formal, organized study of language and literature, philosophy and history, art and music—then were not a coherent grouping. They were regarded at the time as separate and independent domains of the classics, modern languages, rhetoric, history, philosophy, etc., changing themselves, within an accelerating division of intellectual labor within the university along with augmented specializations of knowledge. When the humanities were specifically referred to, as they occasionally were, what was originally meant was the organized study of the classics of Latin and Greek—once the focus of university study, now a minority. These reconfigurations were due to the phenomenal growth throughout the 1890s of new scientific professional organizations, with new journals for newly organized studies (with hitherto unheard-of nomenclatures), and the expansion of the newer social sciences—for example, the first department of anthropology in America was founded at Columbia in 1896.

Moreover, there had begun a series of internal structural changes in the character of the academic culture and of scholarly ideals. Under the influence

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of the dominant German paradigm, new kinds of research were undertaken, new standards of scholarly exactitude and expertness began to be observed and honored, and newly "scientific" goals and methods in, for example, the study of philology and history began to win out among younger members of the profession. And the older model of the gentlemanly scholar professing harmlessly inevitably lost both credence and credit. In the academic scuffling at the turn of the century, then, the more senior members of the traditional pursuits began increasingly to think of themselves as members of an embattled social minority and cultural patriciate—which they in fact were—exercising even and still in their deliquescence institutional authority beyond their numbers, though not beyond their personal learning and gifts and cultural charm, which were often considerable. Distrustful of democracy, resentful of science, made anxious by the secular spirit of a crescent modernity, indifferent or hostile to the immigrant millions disembarking on what they regarded as their rightful, native shores, they conceived of themselves as what we would call today an endangered species or what they might have thought of as a civilized tradition under siege from alien, if not extraterrestrial, forms of life.

They were not without resources however, nor was the society in which they were lodged without needs that they seemed appropriately qualified to supply. In a period of headlong change, the older, classical scholars represented *continuity* and connectedness with a recognizable past. Such a circumstance is particularly salient if unremitting social and cultural flux brings about not only growth but also dislocation, fragmentation, an increasingly rarified and abstruse intellectual division of labor without perceptible coherence or a palpable sense of a conceptual whole. Hence there arose a tendency to look to what was occasionally called "the humanist tradition" (without virtually anyone quite knowing what it was) for both moral guidance for the young and intellectual coherence of an indefinite description. The historical past of Greek, Roman, and Renaissance great men and their works seemed to embody moral and intellectual assurances; and what was embodied could be taught as a *succedaneum,* a commutation for the religious scriptures that were now passing into discreditation and obsolescence.

The older group had as a strategy kidnapped a term from Matthew Arnold. In the name of Culture, they supported and promoted an educational ideal of gentlemanliness, a rather genial spirituality and decorous anti-materialism, and when they were off their guard discoursed about civilization as if it might be coterminous with gentility. Yet as I have noted they were also being assailed from within their own local precincts, for new, younger scholars, flushed with their recent Ph.D.s and inspired by Germanic ideals of graduate study and systematic research had begun to assert themselves

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within the same confined arena. In their commitment to high specialization and exact knowledge, this younger cohort also appeared as part of the imperilment of the older ordinances and rituals of higher education. And from the 1880s until the 1930s, both the idea and the term "the humanities" kept shifting about in meaning. Only gradually did it take on the broader sense that we accept and assume today. Sometimes it implied everything that was *not a science* (but that understanding would exclude a good deal of important humanistic scholarship itself); sometimes it was applied to mean any study that had no clear or immediate *utility*. It was always loosely inclusive—as when in 1919, the ACLS included in its titular self-description the words "devoted to humanistic fields." This matter was for a moment sharply clarified when, in 1923, a number of disciplinary organizations seceded from the ACLS in order to found the independent and autonomous Social Science Research Council. Does this imply that the humanities were by and large merely a residual category; that they were what was left standing after the social sciences hived themselves off and swarmed off to meet their manifest destiny?

Well, yes and no. But mostly no. What we mean today by humanities did not yet exist in the nineteenth century. The term seems effectively to enter the academic taxonomy in about 1930, when at the University of Chicago a general reorganization replaced the Faculties of Arts and Letters with a Division of the Humanities. At Princeton in 1936, an undergraduate interdisciplinary "Special Program in the Humanities" was initiated. At Columbia, the path-breaking freshman sequence in the humanities, offering a reading list of literary, philosophical, and religious texts from Homer to Goethe, taught interdepartmentally, and required of all lower classmen was also instituted in 1936-7. Such programs, courses, sequences, groupings of subjects, and registries of requirements (and there were similar curricular arrangements being installed by both simultaneous inspiration and rapid percolation at many other institutions) were the instructional infrastructure of what was coming to be a new institutional and intellectual context, linking the work in languages and literature, in history, philosophy, linguistics, religion, art and music history, and the so-called softer side of the social sciences. In other words, it is in the 1930s and 40s that the idea of as well as the term "the humanities" begins to be deployed with regular frequency and with the relative specificity of reference to the disciplines that we it to apply today.

Between the latter 1930s and the early 1960s, what we must now regard as an unstable and even premature equilibrium and/or alliance was temporarily established. On the one hand, the rather suddenly and newly revalued older traditions of European humanism were now understood as

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both fragile and imperiled. That imperilment issued from the perspectives on catastrophe that the accessions of Hitler and Stalin and the envelopment of the Great Depression had opened. On the other, there was the cultivation, in both scholarship and students, of the spirit of critical intellect—connected with the canonical version of liberal education which aspires to disinterestedness of critical regard. In this instance this was connected with modernity and modernism, modern art and literature and literary criticism, and with other analytical sources and methods, such as psychoanalysis and some of the social sciences.

This provisional synthesis began to come apart in the 1960s, and by the 1980s the two general perspectives, that of the historical tradition (and of historical transmission) and that of critical urgency were no longer regularly complementary but often were competing and opposed within the academy and the disciplines themselves. Indeed the "humanist tradition" re-emerged for *the humanities* in the university only after both the humanities and the university had begun to be attacked.

The new elements in the social and political culture that surfaced and affected humanistic study in the universities were legion, but some of the major forces were the rediscoveries of poverty, race, and gender, the engagement of the country and the culture in the war in Vietnam, the coming of age of the first generation of post-World War II babies, the children of affluence, entitlement, and idealism, of the new impatience and of new styles of life—that is to say sufficient money, independence, mobility, relatively free sex, particularly after 1961, and drugs. Most of these issues led to group demands, pleas, resolutions, and in too many instances to group-think, and what has been latterly discussed as identity politics.

Such considerations were brought compellingly to bear on university and college campuses, where over 40 percent of the entire cohort of the young were now gathering for the first time (as compared, tellingly, to 4 percent in the 1890s). The themes and realities of war, race, poverty, sex, gender, and styles of life led to deep intramural and intergenerational conflicts.

The academics at the time (and those to come as well) were split once again. Some were radicalized; fewer were turned towards conservatism; more, or most, retreated. More saliently, the middle tended to disappear as the polar extremes had political passion, polemical force, and ideological certitude on their side.

One of the many phenomena started in this period, and sustained since, has involved a general loss of belief or trust in institutions, especially elite institutions, on the part of both the Left and Right. It still can be found today as salvos in the diminished but real guerrilla skirmishing that exists on and among campuses. Radical critics tend to charge that the university remains complicitous with a corrupt, oppressive, unprincipled, and

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unjust social and political order; while conservatives in turn complain that the university is complicitous with the radical critics, most of whom speak from positions within the academic world, as do many, though fewer, of the conservatives as well. Between the two, public support of the university both in attitude and action has diminished.

By the late 1970s, however, the radical and even strongly liberal professoriate was both running out of political steam and losing faith in the ordinary day-to-day processes of politics. There followed the transformation of politics into what has been called "the work of culture." With this alteration in perspective, increasing attention was paid to academic organization—the structures of study, the curriculum, the canon, departmental appointments, interdepartmental committees, admissions, etc.—as new, appropriate ideological work—what some describe as "the long march through the institutions" or "negotiating with the Other." The politics of culture was being called out to replace the anterior forms of direct action.

A renovated cultural populism was in formation. It was committed to certain notions (of representation, for example) that could be at times indifferent to intellect and intellectual standards. The right of course was also reforming itself, although conservative voices largely manifested themselves extramurally.

At the same time, a general shuffling about took place within the academic avant-garde as it reconfigured itself vis-à-vis the European traditions of humanism, such as they were: an association or amalgam tended to be constructed by the academic Left between what was consensually thought of as "the humanities," general education for undergraduates, and the emergent triumph after World War II of so-called democratic capitalism, all of which came to be regarded, at the really bad moments, as nothing more than one description of a Western-controlled racket of world domination, colonialism, and exploitation.

These were some of the more quasi-political and social circumstances out of which the present evolution of what has come to be called "cultural studies" in the humanities evolved. But there were important intellectual elements in this exceptionally complex genealogy as well.

1. There was a native high-level constellation of cultural-historical criticism. This lineage descended in English from Matthew Arnold and the British tradition, extending to T. S. Eliot, and was fused with European modernism as it was translated and incorporated in America through such institutions as *Partisan Review* and the broader-gauged members of the several generations of New Critics, almost all of whom were academics. It comprehended as well such eminent figures as Edmund Wilson, F. R. Leavis, and Lionel Trilling, who also stood for various renderings of

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modernism. And it pursued such analytic methods as psychoanalysis, along with some of the more useful critical findings of social science. This stream has been for the present, extended moment bracketed.

2. There was the inclusion and interiorization of a number of European cultural critics: the Frankfurt school in particular, first Herbert Marcuse in the late 1960s, followed in the next decades by Theodor Adorno.

3. The Frankfurt critics were for the most part neo-Hegelian and proto-post-Marxist on the Left. But there was also a powerful drift of writings from an outlying miscellany of continental and Marxist cultural thought from the 1920s to the present: such figures as M. M. Bakhtin, Walter Benjamin, Antonio Gramsci, and Louis Althusser began to be mixed into the new critical infusions.

4. These were among the sectors that were not included in the successive waves of French theoretical writings that accompanied and followed the political events of the second part of the 1960s and that were equally part of that decade and the next fifteen or more years on the cultural-intellectual front. First came the structuralist thinkers, with their emphasis on linguistics, poetics, and a new kind of formalism—high-level, mandarin theory, at an often refreshing level of abstraction. These were followed by their logical successors, the post-structuralists, who also pointed the way by including anything and everything within their discourses: if there was nothing outside of the text, then it followed that there was nothing that could not be examined as part of one's legitimate intellectual activity.

5. In addition, there was the irregular incorporation of the writings of the English cultural school, in literary and general criticism, chiefly the work of Raymond Williams, and after him that of the Birmingham group founded by Richard Hoggart, and in history and related studies the writings of E. P. Thompson. Williams, in particular, acted as a brake on excess to those who troubled to expose themselves to his influence.

6. Above all, there was steady, continued pressure of another conception of culture that infiltrated itself into intellectual projects in an atmospheric way. This idea descended in large measure from modern anthropology and conceived of culture as the ensemble of relationships among living groups of human beings. That is to say, it was not the same idea of culture that derived from Goethe or Arnold or their Euro-Anglo-American humanist descendants, though at the same time not entirely unrelated to it. It was in its origins and on principle broad, humane, tolerant, inquisitive, open-minded, and on the surface at least non-judgmental. It was doctrinally relativistic, as such specifications imply. And this relativism was without question double-edged; it could be and was applied in the work of interpretation, in the finding of meaning in everything human,

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and was positively useful as an adjunct in hermeneutic undertakings. But it could also be deployed against internal judgments of importance, against determinations of value and any effort to establish assessments or discriminations or relative worth, or standards of excellence as between claimants of all sorts. If it can not be *proved* that Shakespeare is superior to Superman (as it cannot be, in any reasonable sense), then who is to say that Shakespeare and not Superman is what should be studied or included in curricula? This is the tendency at its most extreme and most annoying; we are not through with it yet; its applications have extended far beyond academic courses of study. And we in America are particularly susceptible, given our history and traditions, to this kind of argument or reasoning. Nevertheless, this notion of culture has been important in the beginning of the reconceptualization of certain projects.

As cultural studies began to emerge as a broad, reshaping tendency within the humanities, the organizational model that was customarily pursued was that of the interdisciplinary programs of American studies, many of which had gotten underway themselves in the late 1940s and 1950s, and then, paradoxically, the area studies programs of the Cold War. The titles and interests of such programs are now too numerous to list; but they include prominently African-American studies, women's studies, ethnic studies and post-colonial studies in general, new historicist studies, and gay and lesbian studies. They are, as the saying goes, where the action has been, and it isn't difficult to see why—they are doing something that is intrinsically interesting, however much one may want to hold concretely and specifically in reserve.

Two large influences are to be located in the family history of this latest movement of development. First, there is the return, in an untimely or in unseasonable sense, of Marxism. The reaffirmation of Marxism as a program in the humanistic academy when it is for the historical moment dormant or in an expired state almost everywhere else creates an awkward situation for its most perceptive adherents. In addition, the universalist perspective of Marxism does not accord comfortably with those anti-Enlightenment, anti-Eurocentric, anti-American, and anti-university sentiments which seem often to be passionate driving motives within certain cultural sub-groupings.

The second such flow of influence is connected with the first, though it is not immediately or solely derived from it. I am referring to the general notion of the cultural construction of knowledge—a powerful conception both in theory and application. It has itself a diversity of affiliative roots: in certain Marxist dealings with ideology, in cultural anthropology as a whole, in a number of the larger motions of the nineteenth-century historicist modes of thought, and in the sociology of

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knowledge. Precisely because it is so strong an instrument of analysis, it has to be employed with considerable tact and urbanity—which unfortunately it often is not. For it is only one moderately short intellectual step from the measured historical relativism of this perspective to the lamentable reductionism of a considerable portion of identity politics—to the assertion that one's personal or group situation—class, race, or gender—determines everything substantial that one thinks and believes. And from this point it is merely one step to the claim that "everything is political." Or, rotated to yet another side, the affirmation that the political bearing of a work of literature is the most important thing about it—or that such a work is first of all merely another text in some historical negotiation over power—is equally ruinous. Or to mount the constructionist argument in an extreme form: to claim it as axiomatic that since all knowledge is socially or culturally constructed, no transcontextual validity is possible is equally stifling, even as there is the silent exclusion from that remark of the very axiom that it is stating.

Yet the point to be grasped, I believe, despite such serious drawbacks and unacceptable intellectual groundings, is that we now are also undergoing another shifting in the internal configuration of the disciplines that constitute the humanities. History, culture, literary analysis, and other thick pursuits, now that grand theory has receded, have been let in again through the back door, so to speak. A new range of topics and themes has been legitimately started. To be sure, we are by no means out of the ideological woods; some of the more heated opposing groups are still having it out, and there will continue to be unpleasant scenes and episodes. Nevertheless, there is a growing sense of need for new intellectual departures and an intuition as well that the connections and discontinuities between generations of teachers and scholars need attention and repair. And there is a sense communicated by younger scholars of an awareness of intellectual and disciplinary *fragmentation* of both perspective and knowledge and of the need for new shapes of intellectual *integration*. My own intuition of the current situation is that we must take such new projects as they come, one by one. For the present, it has to be sufficient to commit oneself to the notion that the intellectual excellence of the individual scholar or program has to be the basis for judgment. Cultural projects with overtly political purposes or principally ideological ends must be regarded as suspicious if not outrightly dangerous objects. The inner reconfiguration of the humanistic disciplines of study at the end of the twentieth century will take place whether we want it to or not. Our responsibility at this time, it seems to me, is to make that transition to new purposes and perspectives as honest and open, as flexible and inclusive, as possible. If we turn ourselves to this work, we will be doing what it is appropriate for scholars and critics at any time to do.

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Jerry Martin: The core curriculum represents an answer to the question: what should every educated person know? Some colleges fail to answer that question in a meaningful way. It behooves each faculty to address it in a thoughtful, intelligent, and disciplined way.

In today's curricular debates one of the major fault lines is between those who respect the past and those who prefer the preoccupations of the present. I want to explore this issue. Last year I participated in an interesting conference marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of St. John's College in Santa Fe. The title was the question, "Does the Past Have a Future?"

What struck me as I pondered that question is what an odd question it is—in effect, "Does the past matter anymore?" It's really quite a shocking question and what struck me is that the very fact that we would ask such a question almost convicts us of arrogance and impiety, and the pride that goeth before a fall. For thousands of years in cultures across the globe, ancient wisdom has been the most prized and the old ways the most revered. Confucius warned many centuries ago that the harmonious order of society unraveled when people strayed from the ancient ways. The authority of the constitution was rooted, Sir Edward Coke said, in practices holding "since time out of mind." The African oral epic *Sundiata* celebrates wisdom handed down from one generation to the next over many centuries. The Cherokees thanked their ancestors for a successful hunt. One could go on and on. Even advances over the past were once accompanied by the recognition that, as the medievals put it, "If we see so far, it is only because we stand on the shoulders of giants."

Today, like insolent teen-agers who think the world began with them, we wonder whether the past shouldn't just be discarded like last year's fashions. It's an extraordinary change of attitudes and not a very old one, dating back perhaps two hundred years or so to the time when enlightenment intellectuals decided that no one had ever been nearly so enlightened as themselves. They divided history into ancient, medieval, modern. They began that tripartite distinction. They launched a propaganda campaign that was highly successful, branding their immediate predecessors as having lived in a terrible time called the "Dark Ages."

And so we began discarding, as the kids now say, "dissing," the past. But, once you peel away the past, there's not much left. Augustine, who gave us the most profound analysis of time, notes that the past is by definition past, gone. It is no longer present; it is no longer real. By this logic, Augustine observes, only the present is real. What then is the present? It is what is happening "now"—at this moment, this second, this nanosecond. But he points out, that as soon as you say "now," that "now" is past. In fact everything you can focus your mind on has already fleeted past you, and so you slice away all of the past to the point where you ask what's left. Maybe nothing.

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This philosophical feature of time has its mirror in a philosophical fact about the self. From the Romantics through the existentialists to the postmodernists, there has been a quest for what the philosopher Richard Rorty calls "the authentic self." How do you locate the authentic self? You strip away all culture, all history, all institutions, all of the so-called social constructions of self. Even language and reason must go. The problem is, having stripped away everything that makes us human, there is not much left. The approach is, I guess this is a pun, self-defeating. It is like peeling an onion. The unrelenting logic of this approach led Jean-Paul Sartre to call his magnum opus *Being and Nothingness*. Guess what nothingness is. It's the self, or what is left of it, after being "peeled."

Similar logic has led postmodern theorists to conclude that the text has no author, raising profound questions about whether it has a meaning or indeed whether there is a text at all. Michel Foucault, the postmodern historian of prisons and other oppressive institutions, finally concludes that all institutions are oppressive, even language, and hence even his own denunciation of oppression is oppressive. He sees no way out of this conceptual dead end.

When an approach becomes a *reductio ad absurdum* of itself, you need to consider whether there's a different, more illuminating way of thinking about things. I want to suggest that we start over from a different set of assumptions. First, let us stop talking about "the self" as some purely interior, subjective, self-preoccupied nucleus. We are not selves; we are people, full-bodied, real, living, breathing, thinking, talking people. We are not interior atoms; we are born into families with parents, who live in communities, which have cultures, languages, and institutions. Take them away and we are barely human, like children raised by wolves. And we have pasts. We are longitudinal beings. We have biographies. Our families and communities have traditions. Our nations and civilizations have histories. They make us who we are. They provide the seed bed for what we can become.

Civilization is fragile. If it is not passed on, it disappears. It is not in our genes, not in our DNA. Biologically we live in the Stone Age. Civilization as we know it is the product of thousands, perhaps millions of years of human development. Why did *Homo sapiens* replace the physically stronger Neanderthal man? No one knows for sure but a striking fact is that, while the Neanderthals also had fire, they built a separate fire in a new place each time and then left it behind as they moved along. *Homo sapiens* built hearths, stable fireplaces that were in fact the same fireplace we passed along from one generation to the next. Passing on is what civilization is all about. Miss Julia Mortimer, a schoolteacher in Eudora Welty's *Losing Battles*, understood this: "She didn't ever doubt but that all worth preserving is going to be preserved, and all we had to do

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was keep it going, right from where we are, one teacher on down to the next."

There are several ways we can fail to keep it going. The first is simply by not teaching about the past. We were talking about K-12 education this morning. Elementary school teachers are told to stop teaching the past. So-called education researchers have decided that children are developmentally incapable of understanding the distant past—news to kids fascinated by dinosaurs and the knights of the round table. Instead, the kids are given a bland diet of present-tense stories about the mailman and the newspaper boy and the lady next door. At all levels, history and civics fight for survival in the public schools against an amorphous entity called "social studies"—the intellectual equivalent of "the vegetable that ate Pittsburgh."

In a typical university the problem is often lack of any meaningful requirements at all. Very typical are distribution requirements that are not integration requirements. They don't present an integral comprehensive education. They are dispersion requirements to make sure you don't take too much of any one thing, and often the students are free to choose from literally hundreds of courses grouped in these large categories. A UCLA study reports that, while over ninety percent of institutions claim they have a core curriculum, only 2 percent actually do. According to a survey by the National Endowment for the Humanities, 78 percent of colleges and universities fail to require a course in the history of western civilization.

I will just give you one example of the problem—I'm sure Professor Woodward could give others—the great Lincoln scholar Don Fehrenbacher told me he used to teach the survey course on American history—Colonial times to Civil War—and he noticed that his successor included nothing on the American Revolution. When Fehrenbacher asked him about this the young scholar said, "Oh no, the American Revolution was not important."

A recent study by my own organization found that two-thirds of seventy top colleges and universities no longer require English majors to take a course in Shakespeare. We're not talking about general requirements. We're talking about the future high school English teachers of your kids no longer being required to take a course in Shakespeare.

And what electives are being opened up by this declining requirement in the classics? We found that English majors now choose among such electives as "Melodrama and Soap Opera" at Duke, "Prison Literature" at Georgetown, and "RUBYS: Rich Urban Bikers," the capstone course for English majors at the University of Virginia.

Other actual course descriptions of English courses now available to replace the classics include, for instance: advertising imagery, AIDS activism, alehouses, CD-ROMs, cheap ballads, computer games, consumers, fashion, futurism, global factory, leisure, Madonna, mail-order

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brides, music videos, pop art, radio, rock and rap music, sports, television, textile trade, theme parks, vagrancy, Vanilla Ice, and world wide web.

Not only are such topics devoid of a sense of the past—they're devoid of greatness. One reason to study the past is that there is not a Shakespeare or a Lincoln in every generation. The new courses are aggressively contemporary and anti-elitist. Here's one example, there are others. At the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, humanities requirements can be met by taking any of a list of hundreds of courses. The inclusion of "Vampire Fiction" on this list seems to have evoked no controversy or even notice. However, when a group of faculty asked to offer a "Great Books" alternative that would include freshman seminars on such works as Homer's *Iliad* and *The Federalist Papers*, all hell broke loose. A faculty group organized to prevent its adoption as an option for students. Ironically, one of the leaders in that effort is the co-founder of the organization called "Teachers for a Democratic Culture," which is out to prove that political correctness does not exist. They argued that a Great Books program implied that some works are actually greater than others, which is not acceptable to the anti-elitist mentality. Well, opponents of Great Books almost succeeded until alumni and the public got involved and their argument didn't seem to persuade anyone other than themselves. In fact, I thought if the course in vampire fiction had been called "Great Vampire Fiction," it probably would have been dead in the water.

Another way to fail to pass on the past involves what I call the fallacy of presentism—the fallacy of applying standards that make sense today to figures in the past. It's the opposite or mirror image of anachronism. If we're not, for example, monarchists it must have been wrong for Shakespeare to be one. What a pig Milton must have been to have held such reactionary views on women. Hadn't he heard of the ERA? There's an importing of our current controversies into the past and judging of historical figures in contemporary, often political terms.

Presentism is a seductive vice. It is a form of the sin of pride. We enjoy seeing ourselves as the epitome of human progress and I think you'll find it very difficult if you try to perform this thought experiment. It's hard for us to believe that someday in the future, future generations will look back on us and smile and smirk at what odd and quaint things we believed, much as we do at the Victorians and others before us. The optical illusion of looking through the wrong end of the telescope makes our predecessors look very small and even venal.

We need to reverse the telescope and look at our predecessors up close and in their own terms. We should not assume that, when we and Shakespeare disagree, it is Shakespeare who was wrong. He may have something to teach us. Monarchy may not be relevant in our own day. What did it mean in his? Are his insights into the character of princes relevant only to monarchy?

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Aren't the ambition of Macbeth, the jealousy of Othello with us still? Aren't there still politicians who, like Cassius, have a "lean and hungry look"? Don't we still have to find ways, as Hamlet said, to "prick the conscience of a king"?

The value of the past is not that it is past in the sense of long gone, over with, but that it is present and alive. In conversation, we and Shakespeare are contemporaries. He speaks to our condition and we to his. In her autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*—think about that title for a moment—Maya Angelou writes about preparing for a recitation in school. I'd like to close my remarks with her story:

> Momma (as I called my grandmother) asked me, "Sister, what are you planning to render?" So I told her, "A piece from Shakespeare, Momma." Momma asked, "Now sister, who is this very Shakespeare?" I had to tell her that Shakespeare was white, and Momma felt the less said about whites the better, and if we didn't mention them at all, maybe they'd just get up and leave. I couldn't lie to her, so I told her, "Momma, it's a piece written by William Shakespeare who is white, but he's dead and has been dead for centuries!" Now, I thought that she would forgive him that little idiosyncracy. Momma said, "Sister, you will render a piece of Mr. Langston Hughes, Mr. Countee Cullen, Mr. James Weldon Johnson, or Mr. Paul Laurence Dunbar. Yes ma'am, little mistress, you will."
>
> Well I did but years later when I physically and psychologically left that country, that condition, which is Stamps, Arkansas. . .I found myself and still find myself, whenever I like, stepping back into Shakespeare. Whenever I like, I pull him to me. He wrote it for me:
>
> When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
> I all alone beweep my outcast state
> And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries
> And look upon myself and curse my fate,
> Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
> Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,
> Desiring this man's art and that man's scope.
> What I most enjoy contented least. . . .
>
> Of course he wrote it for me; that is a condition of the black woman. Of course, he was a black woman. I understand that. Nobody else understands it, but I know that William Shakespeare was a black woman. That is the role of art in life.

Peter Wood: Following Shakespeare is a bit difficult. I would like to dedicate my remarks this afternoon to Mr. Eric Coyle, whom you may have

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heard of. He has made a recent appearance in the *New York Times* and also in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Mr. Coyle is the young student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, who this semester is taking sixteen classes while maintaining his 3.9 GPA and will graduate this spring with five separate degrees. He's an interesting figure in that he's a quite ordinary student who went through four years of the University of Nevada program with a C or C- average, then realized he wasn't going to get into law school and had to buckle down. He began taking mammoth numbers of courses and getting A's in all of them, basically by showing up and doing the assignments. The conclusion of the story is that the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, provost, Douglas Ferraro, is quite unhappy with the existence of Mr. Coyle. Provost Ferraro has told the student newspaper at the campus that Mr. Coyle is making the University of Nevada's courses look too easy.

I want to tie Professor Woodward's and Marcus's thoughtful intellectual geneologies and President Martin's reminder of the impending cultural loss to the discussion of this morning. My bridge questions are: Who should seek higher education? Whom should colleges and universities admit? In a society in which a college degree is a prerequisite for most well-paying forms of employment and for social advancement, it is in the interests of many to seek that credential. But to accept the bureaucratic convenience of equating a college degree with a higher education resembles reality about as much as a fluffed-up pillow resembles the Himalayas.

The real Himalayas are, of course, a much less inviting place. If we were to think of the question, "Who should seek higher education?" as an analog of "Who should scale the Himalayas?" we would be pushed in the direction of an answer involving such things as excellent conditioning, prior knowledge of the terrain, acknowledgement of the superior understanding of the Sherpas. We might also look for the right equipment, good maps, and qualities such as prudence, courage, perseverance, and enormous determination. We might also want someone with a bit of experience, perhaps tackling lesser peaks in the Alps or the Andes.

I shall leave the detailed translation of that metaphor to another time. After four years in most American colleges and universities, those who once might have aspired to the Himalayas are often barely able to walk the intellectual equivalent of, say, the Maryland section of the Appalachian trail, having been enfeebled and confused by a curriculum that is intended more for comfort than for climbing.

No modern state invests in higher education to serve only the small minority of most talented and ambitious students. But the reasons political leaders support broader access to college vary in cogency. At the shallow end of the pool, we find such appeals as the claim that contemporary economies in the West require what are often called "knowledge

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workers." This seems to mean that we have abundant forms of paid employment for people who are literate, who have learned some body of material, and who are capable of thinking constructively about what they do. The implication that only college graduates could rise to such heights, however, shows that we are only ankle-deep in the pool. Our economy needs many kinds of highly specialized technical workers no doubt, but we rarely ask ourselves whether mass higher education is the best way to prepare people for these positions.

We wade only slightly deeper in the pool by citing the adage that political freedom depends on an informed citizenry. Has a college education become the only path towards it? What happens when we at last admit to ourselves that the specialized studies characteristic of most contemporary college education do not produce a well-informed citizenry? Two weeks ago I interviewed a graduate student for a national scholarship competition calling for candidates committed to America's constitutional principles. He was bright, personable, eager, and accomplished in two separate academic disciplines. He was also a graduate of an elite liberal arts college, and as it happened, he had never heard of Pol Pot, could not name a single article of the U.S. Constitution, and explained the Bill of Rights as a device by which the American colonists used to keep the British at bay.

We come to deeper waters when we try to reckon with the political reality that the voting public, lured by the understanding that a college education brings large dividends in lifetime earnings, demands access to college for themselves and for their children.

Governments certainly have an interest in encouraging educational accomplishment. In the United States, this is part of the promotion of the general welfare; it's perhaps also to be understood in light of the clause in Article I of the Constitution that grants Congress the power to "promote the progress of science and useful arts." The issue we seem no longer able to address forthrightly is whether the public good is served by a system of incentives that encourages high college enrollment if the unintended consequences include lazy and ineffective secondary schools and stupefied college degree programs. The consequences it seems to me are obvious: high schools feel no real compulsion to educate since colleges will teach that stuff, and colleges cannot do their job because they must first teach what the high schools neglected.

Faced with the reality that college graduates have substantially higher lifetime earnings than those whose educations stopped with high school, students and their parents have strong economic reasons to prefer college. But do governments have such corresponding and compelling reasons to reinforce that preference with massive subsidies? Wouldn't the general welfare be better served by a system of secondary

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education good enough that its graduates would have a fair chance at the high lifetime earnings now associated exclusively with a college degree? The savings in costs, and more importantly, in wasted time and effort, would be enormous.

This argument is often entangled with an appeal for government policies that favor sending as many students as possible to college—that equity requires members of social groups who were once excluded from the benefits of higher education to have access. The principle sounds worthy but it may be impossible to apply in any other than a self-defeating universalization. Virtually the whole population of the United States could plausibly claim to belong to social groups who were once excluded from higher education.

These four points—the need for educated workers, for an informed citizenry, for education aimed at economic betterment, and for equity in admissions—offer potent political oratory. In the United States, no major elected official of either party stands against the conclusion that admission to college and assistance in meeting its expenses should be extended to the broadest possible public.

To find serious political debate on higher education requires that we look to a level of nuance. What American politicians debate is the percentage of aid to students that should be distributed as grants as opposed to loans; whether the loans should be distributed exclusively through banks, or through banks and universities, how much a higher default rate on student loans can be accepted from tribal colleges and historically black colleges than from other colleges and universities; and so on.

Last year, when I published an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* criticizing the foolishness of U.S. federal policies that provide financial incentives to encourage ever larger percentages of American youth to pursue college programs, I was criticized, as I fully expected, for wishing to deny opportunities to the deserving many. But my favorite among the criticisms was that, "Wood does not understand that higher education is a battleship that cannot be turned around." Ah, but Wood does understand, and he sends his congratulations to those clever battleship designers who created the rudderless modern university.

It was of course a collaborative design. The basic model was the land grant university that was ushered into existence by the famous Civil War legislation, the Morrill Act, which called for the creation of "...at least one college in each state where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific or classical studies, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanical arts..." The Morrill Act began the transformation of American higher education into a system that was more vocational as well as, we would now say, more accessible.

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The spirit of the Morrill Act combined with another major development of the late nineteenth century, best represented by the importation of the Humboldtean research university. The idea that any and all subjects could be best pursued by a version of scientific procedure licensed higher education to attempt systematic research and instruction in fields which have no place in the core curriculum and really no good reason to be in the university at all. Is it really necessary to send people to college to teach them how to cook, how to write advertising copy, how to keep books and so on?

The land grant university became, in many states, the founding institution of the state university system. Thus from the outset, in most states, public higher education grew up in the cornfields, wheel ruts, and smoke stacks of practical training for farmers and engineers. It was *this* base, not the liberal arts colleges, the sectarian institutions, or the private universities, that was most transformed by the Servicemen Readjustment Act of 1944, better known as the G.I. Bill, which sent enrollment spiraling upward. A glance at the historical record makes it clear that the G.I. Bill was only the beginning of the college degree explosion.

In 1910, 2.7 percent of the college population, that is the population over age 24, had attended four or more years of college; by 1996 that was 23.6 percent. Counting those who finished college tells only part of the story. As of 1996, 59 percent of Americans who had completed high school had pursued college programs, and upwards of 65 percent of new high school graduates were matriculating to college. The latest numbers are 67 percent. President Clinton has called in his speech earlier this year for 100 percent.

The contemporary American system of mass higher education grew out of the Morrill Act and the G.I. Bill, but it really became established with the Higher Education Act of 1965 and its five subsequent reauthorizations, abetted by state legislatures and by colleges and universities themselves, which developed a voracious appetite for federal and state largesse.

Enrollments under these policies have ballooned, and any worthwhile diagnosis of what's wrong in American education has to come to grips with the problem of scale. Total enrollment in American colleges rose from about 62,000 in 1870 to 355,000 in 1910, by 1950 to 2.3 million. The most recent figures are about 14.1 million.

I have no desire to close educational opportunities to anyone who has the aptitude, the preparation, and the serious aspiration to make good use of these opportunities. My ideal would be a free public school system in every city and town and rural district, no matter the wealth and income of the residents, sufficiently competent to recognize aptitude for higher education and to prepare those students by teaching them history, composition, geography, English literature, foreign languages, mathematics, music, chemistry, biology,

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and physics to the level where serious college study can commence. (That these might have to be charter schools as suggested by Chester Finn, and that the courses in them would have to be taught almost certainly by teachers who had evaded the NCATE-accredited education schools as suggested by Rita Kramer, I wouldn't dispute.) But my ideal would be that the best colleges and universities would admit these students with sufficient assistance to meet their full financial need. My ideal would also be that students who are not well suited to higher education have options that are attractive and worthwhile.

Why has the American high school diploma become little more than a prerequisite to further study? Are we really incapable of educating students over the course of twelve or thirteen years to the level where they could, for example, read newspapers, comprehend bank statements, operate moderately complex machines, command enough reading, mathematics, analytical thinking, and self-discipline to face life's vicissitudes?

Of course we could. We did so in the past. Cultural decline in the midst of economic prosperity takes many forms. For the United States, one of those forms is extending the age of social incompetence into students' mid-twenties. We do so, in part, by wasting everybody's time between the ages of thirteen and seventeen, by teaching them so little that postsecondary education is a practical necessity. The decline of secondary vocational education in the United States is not a vague impression. In 1982 about a quarter, 26.9 percent of high school seniors, were still in vocational programs; by 1992 less than half that, 11.7 percent of high school seniors, were pursuing vocational education. And where were the rest? A great majority had moved into college preparatory programs.

Colleges and universities have become complicit in the great dumbing-down of American education by reshaping themselves to accomodate the level of preparation demonstrated by the students who actually enroll.

Secondary education and higher education have developed a feedback loop, a nearly automatic way to reinforce each other's derelictions. When a high school gives up teaching calculus and finds that its better students still get into good colleges, it learns something that makes it easier in the next round to eliminate analytical geometry or second-year algebra. When colleges notice that increasing numbers of students do not know how to write a coherent essay and resign themselves to teaching basic composition for the freshman year, the high schools learn that they no longer need to concentrate on composition either.

A few months ago, the California State University system released statistics showing that 54 percent of freshmen in the system's twenty-two campuses needed remedial math instruction and 47 percent required remedial English. But I think we've become numb to such statistics. The truth is that one remedial year is not enough for many students, but,

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impatient to get on with the courses they really want to teach, faculty members move on and some of the remedial work that students need is never done at all.

The college or university intent on breaking the feedback loop with inferior secondary education could take several steps. One step, which was brought up in the question this morning by Sandy Pinsker, would be to establish a strong admissions preference for students who have earned the international baccalaureate, the IB. It is a credential that has so far resisted the diseases prevalent in American secondary education. The IB was created in 1971. It was initially a curriculum for international private non-profit schools, but it's now available in many kinds of schools, including public schools in some parts of the United States. By the fall of 1991, which is the most recent date for which I have statistics, over twenty-four thousand students had completed the program. It requires a thorough preparation in the students' best and second-best languages, a quarter of the students' courses in experimental sciences, required courses in mathematics, aesthetics, humanities, and social sciences, and to complete the program a student must turn in a satisfactory four-thousand word essay drawing on personal research.

The International Baccalaureate is by no means the last word in secondary education. We might well prefer a secondary curriculum better grounded in history, for example, but the IB at least suggests a way forward. School boards frequently ask how they can improve high school curricula. Colleges and universities should be prepared to offer concrete suggestions, such as the IB curriculum.

Another more dramatic step would be for colleges and universities to restore what was once the most common way of identifying students for admission, the entrance examination.

Entrance examinations have already begun to reappear covertly in the form of scholarship competitions. Boston University, for example, holds such competitions in the classics and in engineering; it also holds a competition for general university scholarships that's largely based on student essays.

The old entrance examinations were driven from the scene by the rise of standardized tests. Those tests, harbingers of mass marketing in higher education, have evolved into something worse, a merchandising of low standards and loopholes. Standardized test scores once had the virtue of allowing us to compare students against an unchanging standard. We now have the so-called re-centered SAT, in which the historical baseline is eliminated, fine distinctions among students with the highest scores erased, and great care given to portraying gradations among students whose scores are mediocre to low. To this has been added a set of loopholes such as the option for taking the tests untimed for students who claim learning dis-

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abilities, with their scores reported as though the tests were taken under the usual conditions.

Under such circumstances, these tests tell us little about those aspects of the student's mind about which we should care the most. If research universities and highly selective liberal arts colleges pose their own entrance examinations, we could begin to make the feedback loop to high schools run in the opposite direction.

The dilemma of college admissions is that we have shaped American higher education around the principle of broadest possible access but have given too little thought about how such broad access would alter standards. What we have learned in this half century is that it is relatively easy to encourage large numbers of people to attend college. But doing so sacrifices academic standards at both the secondary and college levels, denies genuine higher education to those who could truly benefit from it, and deprives our society of the meritocracy of talent, sensibility, and disciplined intelligence.

Could a core curriculum thrive in a university that does not weigh carefully whether the students it admits are intellectually prepared for that Himalayan trek? Can a society thrive that lacks the courage and resolve to enforce real standards? If we are unable to give up the comforting pretense that college is for everyone, we will dream our way to disaster, failing both the many who could achieve greater satisfaction elsewhere and the few who could make the real ascent.

It's an established courtesy for speech makers to end on an uplifting note. I wish I could. I'm also mindful of Edith Kurzweil's injunction this morning that this is a conference in search of ways for us to move forward, not to repeat the familiar lamentations. I may have lamented too much. I see American higher education, however, ensnared in a net of political expediency, institutional greed, curricular malfeasance, public fear, parental ambition, and widespread misunderstanding of what college can actually accomplish. Extracting ourselves from the net is not impossible, but it will be profoundly difficult. Thank you.

Michael Meyers: I have two short questions to Jerry Martin and to Dr. Woodward. Jerry Martin, I agree that Shakespeare as art is a black woman or whoever you want him to be, but as I recall Shakespeare was born April 12, 1564, died April 12, 1616, so Shakespeare as a historical figure is a question of debate and in that regard the collision of what is in fact the past and what is true about the past has to be factored into academic study. Blacks then were excluded from higher education. Once they got into the exclusionary institutions of higher education, they did not want to assimilate. But they wanted to remember the past, their predecessors, their

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ancestors, and they defined their ancestors in racial ways, through the racial prism. I think the university, perhaps in a paternalistic way, perhaps in an ahistorical and inaccurate way, followed that impulse because it defined everything in terms of race so that there could not be a Shakespeare as art. There could not be ancestors who belonged to everyone because they had truth to bring to the university or some sort of meaning. As a consequence you had so-called black studies pushing up against "white studies," whatever that was, and black studies was defined as black English, black psychology, black history, black, black, black. So my question is: how do you get the university to correct the lies, to correct history? Thomas Jefferson, for example, may be seen in his contemporary times because we then had people like Quakers who did not believe in slavery, who did not believe in racial inferiority. How do you now correct the lies and at the same time keep the university from engaging or falling apart in terms of its instinct for paternalism, and how do you define white culture and black culture, or is there such a thing?

Jerry Martin: That's a very complex set of remarks and very insightful about some of the problems on campus. I'll start with a story. Visiting a college campus, I was told by an enthusiastic curriculum coordinator, "We're having the Hispanic students read Hispanic literature, the black students are reading Richard Wright." He thought this was wonderful and I asked, "What are the white students reading?" He paused and looked at me. And I said, "You have white students. Don't you?" "Well, yeah." "Well, what are they supposed to read?" He scratched his head, never having thought of that. "Well, I guess Nathaniel Hawthorne." I suggested it might be valuable for the white kids to read Richard Wright as well as Hawthorne, and for the black kids to read Hawthorne as well as Richard Wright. This goes to your point. These cultural resources are the heritage of all of us. Many students arrive on campus in the fall of their freshman year completely open to the riches of all the cultures of the world and then are regimented by the people on campus who are devoted to the ethnic identity agenda, and by the end of four years they're alienated from the larger culture.

Another time, I was on a panel with the vice president of a large state university who was talking much in the same line. It was on the West Coast and they had many Asian students so they were putting more Asian materials in the curriculum. I pointed out that I'd noticed the demographic surveys and that, somewhat to my surprise, most Asian-Americans are Christians. Hence, they have more in common with the Hebrew Bible and St. Augustine than they have with Buddhist writings or Confucius. Well, the vice-president was just steamed, and said that Asian students' Christian beliefs were superficial. She evidently believed the deeply racist hypothesis that blood prevails over all.

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Obviously, we need to continue the debate rather than remaining silent. People have been silent because if they spoke out they were called racist, which is a charge you can't defend yourself against. I think we're now getting to a point where more and more people are willing to say, "Look. That won't wash. Give us a real argument for what you want to do. You can't just call us names."

And, as argued, we have to wrest history from the hands of the postmodernists and the ethnic politicians, who simply invent the history that serves their own goals. Columbia University historian Eric Foner, for example, certainly a man of the Left, challenged errors in the Amistad movie. People need to challenge bad history, not think, "Oh well, if this makes some people feel better, it's okay."

C. Vann Woodward: I'd like to support your remarks. Yes, history is not to be determined by racial boundaries or political purposes, even those that we all generally support. History is not the purpose or the promotion of political causes, however good they are. History is something else.

Jerry Martin: A new historians' society has been formed precisely on that premise. I think they're calling it—I love the simplicity of the name—the Historical Society. Scholars of a range of political points of view are saying, "We're going to leave our politics back in our bedroom—or wherever you leave your politics—and we're going to get together and talk history in terms of the evidence and reason," a very promising note.

Victor Kestenbaum: Thank you. Both this morning and this afternoon the matter of standards and the relativizing of standards has come up. French postmodernism and poststructuralism come in for their share of criticism and ridicule. But what about our own intellectual history, i.e., how have we dealt with the relative and the absolute? What do you make of Emerson? In an essay like "Circles," was he making it easy for absolutes or absolute standards? Do you think in "The American Scholar" that Emerson was saying, "Let's celebrate the disciplines," or was he not saying, "Oh, wouldn't it be wonderful if we had Man Thinking?" What is the relationship of Emersonian Man Thinking and curriculum frameworks?

Steven Marcus: I'm not qualified to speak in any real sense about Emerson since I'm only an amateur reader of him, but my sense is that you've touched on a very interesting theme. Yes, of course there is one side of Emerson that in a particular context does relativize, but there's another side, in another context, that absolutizes, and what he absolutizes is Emerson, the reasoning self, his individuality, and things like that, and that

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as it were balances in some very interesting way the kind of relativism you're talking about, another kettle of fish.

Victor Kestenbaum: Just to perhaps better define my point, I was thinking of the relativizing tendencies which are indeed worrisome and are not desirable. We find relativizing tendencies expressed in various ways. What would we put in its place? Well, we might think of something that looks like absolute knowledge or absolute truth, but in some sense absolute truth would require an absolute standpoint, as my colleague Erazim Kohak points out in "Truth and the Humanities." That's a contradiction in terms.

On another matter. Charles Frankel, in his book *The Case for Modern Man* in an essay, "Liberal Society and Ultimate Values," says the liberal outlook asserted that there was a larger realm of truth independent of human beliefs, which human beings could never say they had grasped definitively, a larger world by which all human creeds and ideals must always be checked. This asserts that there are things that transcend the human scene. It is not a denial of it and it is precisely this allegiance to a realm of truth which is always larger than the realm of human knowledge that led to the rejection of the belief in absolutes. After all the wailing and moaning about relativism, what then?

Igor Webb: This morning you quoted Oakeshott. This reminded me of a reading of sound poetry I attended in 1969. These poets discovered that words are composed of sounds, and so the poetry they wrote was composed only of sounds, you know, "rrrrr." Well that's true, words are composed of sounds. Yet to make a curriculum of literature into sound poetry would be to take an observation which is true to an absurd conclusion. I had the same feeling about the sophistication of the contingency observation you made. In the situation in which I think people on the panel are talking about the inability of students to read and write, we shouldn't forget the contingency of our knowledge, but neither should we make it the center of the curriculum.

Steven Marcus: It seems to me that simply to oppose in some naked way the notion of two choices, either radical relativism or a belief in absolute truth, is not what happens or what should happen, because most of the time what we rely on, especially in the humanities, are various kinds of consensual agreements without either radical this or absolute that, that is to say there is what T. S. Eliot called a "common pursuit of true judgment." Now, how are you going to define those terms in any rigorously or exclusively logical way? As long as you have something that at least momentarily resembles an intellectual community, in a sort of classroom,

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in which there are, at least for fifty minutes, certain rules like the net has to be up if we're going to play tennis, then it seems to me one can go on with the kind of discourse educationally, intellectually, and culturally that all of us think is necessary, whose absence is the source of common or general lamentation.

Sanford Pinsker: About the core curriculum. I believe that the great books are much more likely to present you with disagreements across the centuries, present the real questions worth pondering over in your life than any kind of easy reducible answers about the identity politics of race, class, and gender that currently animate so many professors. Indeed, they animate us much more than they animate our students. Our best students are animated by a confrontation with books.

Jerry Martin: It's academic narcissism. Some professors want their students to study them rather than the books. As you know the trend in scholarship recently is to write about one's own subjective personal reactions to materials—life experience, often sex lives and so forth—rather than about subject matter of enduring importance. It's said about a professor whose name I don't recall and who wrote about Thoreau, that she was told, "Well, what you wrote has very little bearing on Thoreau," and she responded, "I'm more interesting than Thoreau." I tried to imagine a fourteen-week semester on me and concluded that a fourteen-week semester on Faulkner was much more interesting.

Speaker: You're not Stanley Fish. He would prefer the fourteen weeks about Fish.

Sanford Pinsker: The great books, I believe, are great neither because they speak to us nor because they don't speak to us, neither because they argue with each other nor because we simply pass them down. The past may be terribly uncomfortable to our pedagogic, religious, or moral beliefs because they're "great." The great often are unpalatable, usually unpalatable. We're studying them because they're morally good for us, or uplifting. That's the hardest thing to actually affirm.

Dick Lanham: For whatever it's worth, I detected one common topic of all of your presentations, namely American anti-intellectualism. Richard Hofstadter, the Columbia historian, in *Anti-Intellectualism in America*, traced anti-intellectualism from around 1800. His theme was that the founders, the revolutionaries of the country, such as Madison, were very intelligent men. But around 1800 there developed, for reasons

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which I forgot, an anti-intellectualist strain which has remained, and the exemplar would probably be Andrew Jackson. According to Hofstadter, this dreadful educational virus was carried by several institutions, one of which was the church and the other the educational system. I was wondering if you thought that the problem is not part of the hull of our country that's been around for a long time.

Jerry Martin: In my earlier years professors defended the classics and the *hoi polloi* out there didn't see why that mattered. They wanted students to get a business degree or a hotel management degree and get a job. Now, we live in an environment in which the classics, elitism, and standards are deplored by professors and have wider support among the public. As Sandy Pinsker said, now it's professors who are dumping Shakespeare as a requirement. When I did talk shows, people who called in wondered why everybody in America knows that Shakespeare is the most important author in the English language and English professors don't. That's a bizarre turnabout.

Peter Wood: I agree with you, Dr. Lanham. Hofstadter's analysis is very powerful. American anti-intellectualism has been around a long time. It's a complex phenomenon with a lot of strands. Certain strands can be traced to the religious origins of some American colleges and have been carried in the academy all along. Another strand is represented by Senator Morrill, an advocate of "training" in the applied arts to be taught in colleges and universities. He helped to institute the pragmatic turn in American higher education, that element of American utilitarianism which has never been very far away from American anti-intellectualism. So the question is: has this problem deep and complex historical roots? It certainly does. I agree with President Martin that it has emerged in a new and frightening form in the last twenty-five years. But to understand it truly we should read Hofstadter and look deep into the roots of American culture, which have an anti-elitist strain that is closely connected with anti-intellectualism from the late eighteenth century.

Edith Kurzweil: I want to address two points, one by Michael Meyers, and the other one by someone else. About ten years ago, here at Boston University, we had a conference like this one, and we heard a wonderful talk by a black member of the faculty, Wilson Moses, who among other things said that he learned how to read on his mother's lap and she was reading Shakespeare to him. "Of course," he said, "Our *Othello* is different from your *Othello,*" but that didn't matter. Okay? As a postscript, I must add he did not allow me to print his talk verbatim because he was afraid

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of the backlash he would get from his peers. In a way I'm encouraged to see that this no longer happens. People like Thomas Sowell, Shelby Steele, and Michael Meyers speak up. They're the ones who can truly help. I'm teaching a core course to a most diverse student population and we all read, among many other things, Shelby Steele, and *Invisible Man*, which helps the students get into lively discussions. However, there is opposition to the core curriculum from the faculty. Students understand the connections to identity formation by, for instance, Sylvia Plath, Freud, Marx, Goffman, George Herbert Mead, and Lasch, which are difficult to teach by people who are taught in one narrow discipline.

The second point is on postmodernism. It so happens that I wrote on French structuralism before either structuralism or postmodernism were introduced in this country. But academics moved to one or the other without differentiation. The French were either being praised or blamed for postmodernism. But in fact postmodernism in America is not what it is for the French. For example, in feminist studies, women's studies, there's a reader by Marx and Courtivron that came out in 1980 at a time when in Paris that type of feminism no longer was considered valid. The most prominent women had turned to something else, had denounced it. So we're really dealing with another phenomenon which in some ways—and here I'm being very superficial—provided an intellectual way out for a disenchanted part of the new Left.

David Pryce-Jones: The Australian historian Manning Clark died not long ago and one of his pupils wrote in his obituary, "He freed history from the tyranny of facts." Nazism and Communism were both within living memory and the facts are more or less available. The first two speakers it seemed to me—and this is where I'm rushing in where angels fear to tread—laid more emphasis on objectivity and presentation of the truth rather than on moral judgment. Professor Marcus spoke about the weakening of specific moral gravity, I think he said, and when German historians, some ten years ago in the *Historikerstreit,* tried to relativize Nazism the facts simply prevented it. It was impossible to sustain that Nazism was really a response to prior Communism in the light of what the Nazis had actually done.

Lately, we have witnessed a failure in the academy the like of which I think has not occurred since the Enlightenment, which is the failure of the sovietologists. They proved to be today's equivalent of alchemists and their presentation of the Soviet Union bore no relation at all, as we now see, to what the reality of the Soviet Union as documented in the archives really was. When the historian Robert Conquest wrote *The Great Terror*, he was insulted as a disreputable figure. In fact, he scrupulously used demographic facts, later found to be understated. Similarly when a Soviet economist

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by the name of Igor Berman defected to this country, he couldn't get a hearing. He was the man who'd written the Soviet budget and the Soviet budget on both sides of the ledger was an identical numeral of many digits. He said any document like that can't be truthful. He was laughed out of court by some professional economists. Now why did so many people, including professional historians, turn against their colleagues with such savagery and why don't they now come forward and say they were wrong, that something has happened to show that they were wrong, that the beginning of wisdom is to return to the facts and to think through their positions again?

The first two speakers might have brought out more what I think is the difference between good work and great work, which is the strength of moral judgment, and the fact that the moral judgment would be questioned down the centuries doesn't make that moral judgment any the less. A great work of history is comparable to a great work of art. Nobody is worried by the fact that Shakespeare is a Tudor spin doctor or that Dante is very much caught up in the Guelph and Ghibelline conflict.

In the end, moral judgment, and the profoundness of the moral structure in the author, is really the only worthwhile thing.

Igor Webb: Thank you all and we look forward to seeing you again tomorrow morning.

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Session III: Administering the University of the Future

Edith Kurzweil: Once again, I guess quality's making up for quantity. We heard excellent papers yesterday and are looking forward to equally interesting ones today. We're going to begin with Helga Deppe-Wolfinger, who has come from the University of Frankfurt. She's the foremost authority in Germany in the areas of third world and gender studies, and she has been a leader in bringing about scholastic reforms. The next speaker is Jon Westling who, as you all know, is a historian and the president of Boston University. You all have been to Bob Brustein's repertory theater in Cambridge and have read his reviews. Today, he's going to talk on "Art Education: What Is Its Place?" The last speaker is Bernard Avishai. He'll speak on "Education for a New Economy: What Businesses Can Do." Thus they all will look at the same issue on how to administer the university of the future, but from very different perspectives. Helga Deppe-Wolfinger.

Helga Deppe-Wolfinger: Thank you. I will speak about "The German Case: Assuring High Standards in Mass Education at the University Level." High standards in mass education—is that not a contradiction in terms? Before answering this question let me make a few remarks on the German university system. Thanks to the nineteenth-century reformer Wilhem von Humboldt, this system is characterized by a marvelous freedom of access and an amazing freedom of choice. We keep cherishing his legacy, though today's mass education, financial restrictions, and other constraints would suggest greater streamlining. The shortcomings of this tradition are obvious. Educating oneself as Humboldt would have it takes much longer than working through a syllabus and taking a degree. So, whereas we may offer the best education, we also have the oldest undergraduates in all of Europe. Politicians and the labor market are not amused and keep suggesting stern measures. Therefore, our principal challenge is to steer university education away from both "anything goes" and "spoon-feeding." This is a considerable challenge. The dimensions of this task become obvious when you consider the peculiar features of our system. Foreign visitors are particularly struck by the following: university education is considered a public affair; with few exceptions, German universities are state universities, controlled and funded by regional ministers of education; it is free both for German and foreign students; no one pays dues or fees; there are no entrance examinations, a high school certificate will do.

Yesterday, Kurt Scholz noted that this is a compliment for the schools. Maybe so. In the German system, there are no entrance examinations, no obligatory yearly examinations, no bachelors' degrees. Instead, we have diplomas or master's degrees by means of state examinations for lawyers, doctors, and for teachers. Study programs and examinations vary from department to department. Some are closely knit, others are loose. Some

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require lots of oral and/or written exams, papers, and practical exercises while others do not. About ninety-five percent of our faculty have tenure and are civil servants. German professors teach eight hours per week. The rest of the time is devoted to research, exams, administration, and meetings. Teaching and research are closely connected and cannot be separated. Evaluation of both teaching and research is not yet firmly established, although peer evaluation in research and through grant-giving agencies does exist. Almost 80 percent of students finance their studies themselves. There are neither student loan programs nor grants. Scholarships are rare.

To provide a more precise overview of German universities, I will use Goethe University as an example. It is one of the ten largest universities in Germany. The number of students in 1998 is around thirty-four thousand, of whom 14 percent hold a foreign passport—representing ninety-two different nationalities. This is one of the highest percentages of foreign students in any German university. About 50 percent are women. However only 23 percent of assistant teachers and only 11 percent of professors are female. More than one hundred seventy different courses are taught in twenty-one departments. Apart from engineering, Goethe University offers almost everything under the academic sun including the education of teachers for all school levels. Teaching and research, by over six hundred professors, is supported by more than a thousand teaching and research assistants, and by another thirteen hundred administrative staff—not including the medical staff of the university clinic. Organization and decision-making differ from one German state to another, because the German educational system is characterized by a pronounced federalism. In a way the university organization in the state of Hessen, and therefore in Frankfurt, is a combination of parliamentary and bureaucratic elements. A president, one or two vice presidents, and a chief administrator are the central executors. However, executive functions are the responsibility of twenty-one deans and the many directors of institutes. The parliamentary structure includes five committees—research, budget, library, computer services, and the senate—where all deans are members. Other German universities have similar frameworks, and are attempting to perform their three-fold task: top-level research, providing higher education to ever increasing masses of students, and training future research personnel. They have to do so under restricted financial conditions. Goethe University, for instance, has lost about 30 percent of its budget for education and research within the last three years.

Now, I will return to our initial question, whether high standards and mass education can be reconciled. German universities are undergoing a profound crisis, which is above all a financial one. Since they are entirely financed by the state, they have suffered from severe budget cuts. But this

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is a political crisis as well. During the last few years both private wealth, especially of banking institutions, and public poverty have continuously increased. Public poverty is linked directly to mass unemployment and to a tax system favoring private companies. The German sociologist, Ulrich Beck, has presented a thesis demonstrating that large companies have become almost the only taxpayers. This means that the real tax is paid by the working people. This development may be attributed to the neo-liberal politics by the German conservative liberal government during the last sixteen years. Its models are drawn from the Thatcher government in Great Britain and the Reagan administration in the U.S.A. However, both countries have meanwhile changed governments. Germans will vote in September this year.

This neo-liberal paradigm, I believe, is of direct relevance, since the poles of state regulation and freedom of market neo-liberalism favor market forces and reduce the structural measures that supposedly limit their freedom. What is more, neo-liberalism tends to declare such structural measures as outdated and replace them by catchwords such as flexibility, deregulation, and private responsibility. However, patterns of private entrepreneurship became dominant, and are now being applied to all other social institutions, such as health care and issues of public safety, as well as to education. We are, in fact, witnessing the streamlining of efficiency, the so-called economization of society.

No wonder, then, that universities too have become victims of this pervasive economic pattern. State regulation, which could also mean protection, is cut back in favor of exposure to national and global competition. German higher education has not yet been privatized and students are not yet thought of as consumers, but it is on the way. This happens not only by way of strong economic and political forces outside universities but even by inside forces that are trying to institute competition and customer orientation, such as the introduction of student fees. Furthermore, plans of dividing universities into research and teaching ones no longer meet with general resistance. There are many who cherish the idea of establishing powerful university management at the cost of democratic decision-making. No doubt we are on the way. However, is it the right way? We can observe that wherever university management already has acquired strength, a new rationality is spreading—which tends to classify scientific output according to its so-called usefulness for society. More precisely, budget cuts are being made in the social sciences, such as social pedagogy, gender studies, education. Why is that so? It seems that these disciplines share a fascination with problems generated by society, such as poverty, unemployment, deviant behavior, etc. One well-known German scholar has argued that problems themselves are made marginal by marginalizing the disciplines that deal

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with them. In other words, because social deviance does not conform to the criteria of efficiency, the disciplines dealing with social deviance may be considered redundant. But there are opposition forces within German universities that do not follow this new neo-liberal credo. I belong to them, because I feel that the university is much more than a company dealing with profits and losses, and much more than a bureaucracy or a consumer-oriented service organization. I believe that mass education and high educational standards may be reconciled by fighting against the overwhelming of universities by this neoliberalism. Instead of supplying a catalog of names and definitions which form the conceptual basis of this claim, I will give you my version of the university for the next century—that does not betray its traditions and yet is ready for the future.

First: the university would be a place for education, reflection, and expertise, open to men and women, nationals and foreigners alike, members of different ethnic groups, cultures, and religions. Roughly 50 percent of professors and assistant teachers would be female.

Second: the university would be a place for professional training both for science and for certain state-regulated professions—for lawyers, judges, teachers, physicians, etc. And it would be a place to instill self-confidence in students who participate in the democratic process.

Third: teaching and research must not be separated, because interesting teaching draws on research, and research is the best remedy for boredom. Reciprocally, students' questions are necessary to feed researchers' curiosity and to bridge the gap between generations.

Fourth: universities must compete in terms of quality. Even in Germany it ought to be self-evident that budgets must be distributed according to performance. Scientific performance, however, may not be easily quantified. Take the example of outside funding for women's studies in its early phase, or ecological research. To get funding for such projects is difficult since innovative thinking and research often happen off the track. But is it the job of universities, no matter how difficult it is to measure their efficiency, to get involved, to criticize, to develop alternatives or visions?

Fifth: universities are democratic institutions in a two-fold sense. They are pillars of democracy as long as they guarantee equal access to education, and they have turned out more and more people with an academic education. Opening universities to more of the talented young people in the seventies in Germany did not result in a loss of quality, despite crammed classrooms. If you compare exam results in those years with today's, you realize that even under conditions of mass education high standards were maintained. Today, some 30 percent of our high school graduates go on to higher education. We should not lower this ratio. We don't need education for an elite but we need a lot of well-trained people,

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trained on a high scientific level. We don't need to split up today's university system, and we want to continue democratic decision-making among students, professors, assistant teachers, and administrators.

Professors tend to defend jealously their own disciplines and fields of research. But only if the university conceives of itself as a social unit of teaching and research where egotism and common interest are reconciled will it be able to meet the challenges of an ever more complex world.

Sixth: education and science, research and teaching, are public, not private domains. Therefore they are the responsibility of the state, not the market. Only the state can guarantee social justice, social peace, and democratic access. This does not mean that the state should regulate everything within the universities, such as every new recruitment or every new study program. Greater autonomy would enhance the university's capacity to organize itself. To that end, sufficient funds are needed from the German government to keep up with other nations. State protection, academic freedom, and institutional autonomy do not automatically produce high-level performance in teaching and research, but they provide the framework to make it possible. The French philosopher Pierre Bourdieu is right when he warns of a destruction of civilization, that "in Europe is closely connected with a public service providing equality before the law, the right to education, health, culture, research, art, and above all employment."

Seventh: globalization of markets will be followed by an internationalization of higher education. There's not very much we can do about it. We should, however, maintain a vision of the university, contribute to making international competition not the only element we have in common, and try to unite in a common quest for a future world that is more social, more humane, and just for all its inhabitants.

Jon Westling: The subject of this portion of our conference is "Administering the University of the Future." This is a heartening expression of optimism. It implies not only that universities will exist in the future, but that someone will administer them.

Certainly that is not the only possible future which could be extrapolated from our own times. Another, less optimistic, extrapolation might be that we will reach the point where universities are as random, as decentralized, as ubiquitous, and as common as cable television and just as elevating.

Nevertheless, I am content to embrace the sanguine scenario suggested in our section title, and to announce my intention of administering the university of the future, in part, by restoring some fine old pieces of the university of the past.

A Boston University colleague who teaches a course on art in antiquity recently forwarded to me a copy of a student's note. It was, naturally,

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an e-mail note. The student had gone to the library to begin research for a paper on Pompeii and had been disconcerted to discover that some of the sources were in foreign languages, that the materials were scattered in different parts of the library collection, and that she was faced with the Herculean—or at least Xena-ish—task of sorting through all this debris to reach the material she wanted. A thoroughly modern student, she plaintively asked her professor, "Is there a website?"

This student—dare I call her Perplexified Penelope?—possesses a highly-developed version of a skill characteristic to our age. She knows how to make simple tasks appear overwhelmingly difficult. Reading her brief, semi-literate note to her teacher, one can almost hear the laborious groaning of the mental gears and the anxious twittering of the neurons confronted with the task of spelling such big words as "immensely" and "library." What soul could be so hardened as to read this without pity—and without wishing that Penelope find the Elysian browser that will waft her gently from website to website throughout her life, without the toil of having to reboot?

To make things seem harder than they really are: English does not have a ready word for this, a lack which it is high time we remedied. I can suggest several possibilities to capture shades of meaning: *arduize, impassify, difficate,* and *operose* seem useful, the last an adjective that could immigrate to verb-dom. I am particularly partial, however, to another possibility: to *cumbersomicate,* as in, "Asked to make her bed, young Penelope cumbersomicated until her mother did it for her."

I do not mean to suggest that only students arduize and impassify. The art is highly developed in universities, and students learn from the splendid examples set by faculty members and administrators. What is much contemporary literary theory or art criticism or philosophy but advanced cumbersomification? Would we not wish to say, for example, "Professor X employed a Foucaultian-feminist analysis to difficate on the works of Jane Austen?"

Things were not always so. In the 1570s, Sir Philip Sidney was in his early twenties and, not unlike some young people today, waiting around. Despite his prodigious gifts—high birth, intellect, and relentless ambition—the world had not beaten a path to his door. To be sure, he had not made it easy for himself. His exuberance was not tailor-made for a queen who believed that governing required an unusually even keel. Nonetheless, whatever his feelings were on the occasion of his underemployment, Sir Philip spent his time well, writing his *Defense of Poesy*.

This magnificent and magisterial essay, which he wrote when he was just 26, is a tour-de-force of *sprezzatura*—the skill of seeming effortless. For courtiers of the sixteenth century, this skill was a practical requirement to

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make an impression in a social setting as rigidly choreographed as the upper reaches of Elizabethan England. Speaking, writing, dancing—even sword-play—were to be practiced with the precision, grace, and glee of a natural.

Half a millennium has a way of changing things. Penelope does not possess sprezzatura. It is safe to say that she cannot pronounce it, and is likewise disinclined to look it up. Students may still desire effortlessness, but they now more commonly take the direct route. It is indeed easy to appear effortless in the absence of any effort.

Sprezzatura, the graceful appearance of effortlessness, cannot be achieved by idleness. It requires hard work. And one of the effort-ful things I would like to see re-introduced into the university of the future is an old-fashioned regard for, and pursuit of, high verbal competence.

American higher education is, of course, not unaware that large numbers of students are admitted to college unable to write well and that many of these students graduate four or five years later still unable to craft a coherent paragraph, let alone a graceful essay. The academy has impassified this problem, and so does not have a solution; it has, however, at least begun to acknowledge that the problem exists.

But I think our rhetorical quandary goes much deeper than the withering of effective writing instruction in elementary and secondary education. We have reached an even more arid desert, one in which most American children have a profoundly attenuated sense of how language can be used.

Some—not all—of this is due to popular culture. We live in an environment that is oddly divided. One large part is saturated with direct expression of feelings, which even when not vulgar, vulgarizes. Another large part pays homage to the ethos of "coolness," in which affectless understatement and inarticulateness are cultivated and expressiveness, passion, and other indications of involvement are studiously avoided. Nevertheless, people whose sense of language is shaped by carefully calibrated "age-appropriate textbooks," television dialogue, rock lyrics, or even by contemporary religious and political expression do develop a fine sense of the nuances of demotic speech.

I do not mean this ironically. Clearly, everyday speech does have its nuances, and clichés can be wielded to great comic effect or to elicit a certain kind of pathos. We even have playwrights such as Pinter and Mamet who specialize in that territory.

What we widely lack is an understanding that language can perform more complicated feats. Or, more specifically, what we lack is language that is available to the average high-school graduate to express thoughts that the average young adult should be able to think. Ease of thought on difficult matters can never be achieved if an individual's repertoire of language is stunted.

American rhetoric has been stunted in numerous ways. The loss of working vocabulary is not easily documented, but to compare a typical

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article in a student newspaper of 1958, for example, with such an article today is to discover a vanished world in which a student could unselfconsciously use language such as "contagious liveliness" and "feted and canonized." I may note that I draw these terms from papers that carried student letters calling for a new library and proposing that the university "abandon intercollegiate athletics." I picked up a recent student newspaper to look for a contrasting passage but did not get beyond, "I was plopped in front of the television watching Real Sex 5000 on HBO."

Once-familiar grammatical and rhetorical forms have also all but disappeared. The apostrophe, our language's lovely, economical way of signaling contraction and possession, has become as mysterious as a quark to most writers. Accurate use of the subjunctive voice and confident control of embedded clauses have been, as it were, abducted from our language in the middle of the night. Asked to provide an example of metonymy, elegy, or antithesis, the student will be flummoxed: a definition, just possibly; an example? Is there a website?

We have developed in the United States an elevated fear of rhetoric as something unnatural, unmanly, and manipulative. This suspicion has deep roots in our culture, from Plato's scorn for the Sophists, those founding fathers of the professoriate who had the un-aristocratic bad taste actually to accept payment for their teaching, to the justifiable weariness felt by many Americans for the shopworn tropes of late nineteenth-century political oratory—the sort of exercise for which H. L. Mencken coined the wonderful noun, "bloviation."

There is, no doubt, a valid apprehension of smoothtalking seducers: salesmen, lawyers, and fakers of all sorts who use rhetoric to overcome good sense. But unilateral disarmament is no defense against such people. The mind, deprived of rhetorical skills, does not thereby move more freely among the essentials of the human condition. Far from attaining authenticity, the rhetorically uneducated mind is confined to banality and cliché.

The loss extends to the blighting of memory. Training the memory, as Father Ong has reminded us, was for centuries a recognized, honored, and highly elaborate sub-discipline of the art of rhetoric. But we no longer teach children to memorize, a powerful intellectual tool now wrongly and endlessly denigrated throughout our schools as "rote learning." As a result, students reach college with minds furnished with TV jingles but no Shakespeare. They are deaf to allusions to biblical language and thus ill-equipped to read Dante, Melville, or Eliot. If they are among the few to have studied history, how likely are they to be among the fewer still to have developed their memories well enough to read complex historical narratives? To read well, we observe too late, also requires mastery of some of the rhetorical arts.

The decline of rhetoric is evident as well on almost every occasion on which people now speak, from wedding toasts to stump speeches. Our

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everyday oratory has petrified like a log from a Carboniferous swamp. We recognize that certain occasions require certain kinds of speech, but what we usually rise to resembles the achieved marriage of the right thought with the right word no more than the scaly imprint of a tree-fern in ancient shale resembles the living tree.

For many people the mere possibility of language reaching to something higher, better, or truer in the human condition has been sealed shut.

When did the art of rhetoric slip away from its place in the liberal arts? Just moments ago. When a student applied to Boston University in 1870, he was expected to be conversant with great works: Milton, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Homer. Candidates for the freshman class took examinations in Latin (on the *Aeneid*), in Greek (on the *Iliad*), in mathematics (arithmetic, algebra, geometry), in English (five works of literature, in that year *Othello* and *King John*, Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield*, Carlisle's *Essay on Scott*, and *The Mill on the Floss*), as well as in geography and history.

Rigorous though these may seem, the faculty and administration found it necessary to raise standards higher—quite simply, too many people could meet them, and enrollment hit its limit. Thus, examinations were added to test applicants' abilities in four languages other than English.

Once admitted, things weren't any easier. Boston University's yearbook of 1880 stated, "The aim of the college is to give that liberal education which is the true preparation for the study of a learned profession, or for a life devoted to letters, education, or public affairs. It accordingly provides thorough and systematic instruction in all three branches of literature, philosophy, and science known as the liberal arts." Perhaps you've read passages to this effect in your own college catalogues, but I suggest to you there is a difference. Then, it meant something. To prepare students for learned professions or lives in arts and letters, Boston University freshmen were required to take Latin, Greek, Mathematics, English Composition, and Rhetorical Exercises and Elocution for a full year, together with a two-hour course in German, and one-hour courses in Greek and Roman History. Sophomores took Physics, Chemistry, Geology, Biology, Botany, Zoology, and Physiology.

You will have noted that among these requirements was the requirement for a full year of Rhetorical Exercises and Elocution. For students to use their substantive knowledge, they also needed to learn how to communicate in substantive ways.

In a splendid article last year in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Lawrence Biemiller recounts the history of the Goethean Literary Society at a York, Pennsylvania, school which later became Franklin and Marshall College. In the mid-nineteenth century, the society met on Saturday mornings to discuss such things as "Would it be beneficial for the United States to admit Texas to the Union?", "Is England justified in carrying on

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war against China?" and "Has not the civilization of mankind been as much affected by the influence of the fair Sex as by any other cause whatever?" Not bad for Saturday mornings.

Most evident in Mr. Biemiller's article is the adoration the students had for language and debate. One student's speech, entitled "What Makes the Orator?" concluded that, "No gesture or attitude; no beautiful allegory or simile; no boisterous emphasis or soft cadence can make a man eloquent. True eloquence emanates from higher sources. It is only when a speaker is carried away by his passions and forgets these artificial and studied formulae, that he becomes truly eloquent."

Such literary societies—like England's wars against China—eventually came to an end. And like those wars—the Opium Wars—the aftermath was monstrously destructive. The eloquence the students of that age displayed is now no more than an historical artifact. In its place we have the easy opiates of "self-esteem" and television culture and talk-show chatter. For this state of affairs, we in higher education should not expect to be held blameless. To do so would be to ignore what we all know: colleges and universities are setting the bar too low. One of the principal reasons that students do not mull the issues of the day on Saturday mornings in favor of sleeping in, is, sadly, a consequence of the academy asking too little.

It is discomforting that in 1880 only one in two thousand people went to college. By 1997 about 67 percent of high school graduates matriculated at some school of allegedly higher learning, and many educators today vindicate lower standards by lauding higher participation.

Can we have both high standards and high participation? They are not *logically* opposed. We may draw some encouragement from the fact that demand for entrance into the nation's most challenging institutions is, in most cases, higher than demand at less challenging colleges and universities. On the other hand, much larger numbers of students attend those colleges and universities that act as if setting high standards would drive off students.

Is it practical in this context to harbor hope for something like the rebirth of serious study of the rhetorical arts? I am divided on the question. Rhetoric is by no means a tradition reserved for the social elite. It is a tradition broad enough to include Aesop as well as Cicero; John Wesley as well as John Donne; Abraham Lincoln and William Jennings Bryan as well as Daniel Webster and Franklin Roosevelt. Mastering rhetoric was once the high road to social mobility for those not born to wealth or position. In that sense, restoring it to a more central place in higher education is deeply in accord with democratic sentiment.

On the other hand, American culture is currently in a phase of profound self-satisfaction. Low intellectual standards prevail along with infatuation with celebrity and confident cynicism about the way the world

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works. It is not a culture receptive to *ars rhetorica*, except in the sense that it admires brash dishonesty if it is cleverly enough packaged.

Against that background, I doubt that rhetoric in the great tradition of Sir Philip Sidney stands much chance. Universities can and do change culture, but it is a process of generations. My prescription for the university of the future, therefore, begins in the administration of the university of today. Serious universities—universities that understand that their educational obligation extends far beyond equipping the next generation of technocrats and specialists with the tools of their trades, universities that are committed to endowing society with a richer, more worthy vision of what humans may be and what they may achieve—these universities will begin to restore rhetoric to its rightful place in a liberal arts education.

By what practical steps will they proceed? My crystal ball does not have unlimited horizons, but I see a few of those steps. Several weeks ago Boston University held its first student *conversazione*. A *conversazione* is a form that sprang up in England some years ago: it is essentially a paper by an invited speaker and a dinner party with guests from diverse fields subjected to the mild discipline of talking about the paper with each other and, after dinner, posing questions to the speaker. Boston University has been holding these conversazioni with grown-ups for almost a decade, but we decided to find out whether students could rise to the occasion.

The results were greatly encouraging, not in the sense that students demonstrated sprezzatura; they did not. But neither did they arduize. They rose to the occasion with such good will and desire to succeed that I was thoroughly convinced of the existence of an underground ocean of longing for serious intellectual conversation. These were students who would gratefully welcome the opportunity to acquire and to use the arts of rhetoric.

Part of the problem is that we have created on America's campuses a world where students have very little occasion to engage in serious conversation with adults. Campuses often resemble late-adolescent ghettos. At Boston University and most other universities, from 3:00 on a weekday afternoon until class the next day, most students converse only with other students. Even in class, serious conversation in the full sense of the word is frequently lacking. Because colleges and universities in this century have more and more defined themselves merely as transmitters of information rather than shapers of the minds and character of the young, we have neglected that form of rhetoric that is best suited to drawing students into a civilized community: adult conversation.

Still, restoring rhetoric will take more than increased opportunities for conversation and better freshman English courses, although both will help. Successfully restoring rhetoric to the curriculum will require the long-

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sought and seemingly endlessly delayed reform of public schools. The new emphasis on rhetoric will require colleges to replace such vague gestures as grading "classroom participation" with weekly recitations rigorously graded for presentation as well as content. We will have to teach many of our faculty members the forgotten art of administering effective oral examinations. We will have to instruct ourselves as well as our students in the languishing art of close listening.

These are tasks not just for English departments but for whole universities, and not merely for departments or colleges that specialize in communication, but for every field. Indeed, rhetoric cannot be taught well in the absence of a real subject. To teach students empty form or rhetoric for the sake of rhetoric is to poison the subject, and was one of the root causes of rhetoric's fall from educational and cultural fashion. Students rightly distrust the hypocrisy in the idea of training people to argue effectively on any side of any issue. Rhetoric rightly conceived is skill at joining language to thought, and the way to teach it is to make it, as much as possible, part of the fabric of instruction throughout the liberal and applied arts.

Not many of our students will make a career out of being an orator, but every career can be enhanced by the command of clear, thoughtful, and literate expression. As one Goethean Society oration titled "Who Are College Students" began, "We are the embryo of stars, in the process of development, which are to illuminate the dark world when those before us have disappeared."

As you are all well aware, the world eventually did beat a path to Sir Philip Sidney's door. His *Defense of Poesy* still illuminates part of the dark world. And it offers a splendid inducement to pursue his art: "...you shall...be most faire, most rich, most wise, most all: you shall dwel upon Superlatives."

But Sir Philip also had a word for poor Perplexified Penelope: those who reject the art of poesy will suffer a terrible fate: "when you die, your memorie die from the earth for want of an Epitaphe."

We stand on the edge of that fate, an age so sunk in vanity that it feels confident that its talk-show hosts and screenwriters will take care of the flattering epitaph. It is up to universities to help redeem this time, and restoring rhetoric is an indispensable part of the task.

Robert Brustein: I've been asked to talk to you about arts education, a broad topic with a wide spectrum of possibilities. I'm bound to make hasty generalizations, to be superficial. And I will restrict my comments primarily to the university with which I am most familiar, Harvard. Harvard is hardly typical of arts education in the American university. Indeed it may be extremely atypical. But its very idiosyncrasies might help to illuminate the knotty issues of university education in the arts.

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The word "arts" is traditionally invoked at Harvard and other universities to describe the characteristics of its curriculum (for example, "liberal arts") or the nature of its professorate (for example, "the faculty of arts and sciences"). Yet, while most colleges and universities have created degree-granting departments devoted to arts training or arts appreciation, and many have added professional schools, Harvard, almost alone among the elite institutions, has largely, though not entirely, limited its arts education to history and theory. This may be because Harvard has never thought of itself as a breeding ground or home for practicing artists. The last two presidents, Derek Bok and Neil Rudenstine, have expressed strong personal feelings for the arts. Bok's family established the Curtis Institute for Music in Philadelphia, and Rudenstine, himself a Renaissance scholar, is married to a distinguished art historian. The faculty of the university as a whole, however, seems to be less concerned with the role of the creative arts. At the same time that many professors look benignly on something called "Arts First," which is a long weekend that celebrates extracurricular undergraduate performance, some of them tend to regard the professional artist as a figure marginal to university life.

Poets are an exception, probably because Cambridge and Boston, the civic seats of logos in America, are cities historically associated with poets—Longfellow, James Russell Lowell, and T. S. Eliot among others. On the other hand, while resident composers, instrumentalists, novelists, dancers, painters, and sculptors may abound in arts-conscious colleges like Bennington, Bard, and Oberlin, they are rare around the Harvard campus, unless they can be imported for a day or two by the "Learning From Performers" series to hold a seminar and eat lunch with undergraduates. As permanent Harvard faculty, practitioners are admitted only if they have advanced degrees or if they can put their creative endeavors at the service of academic duties. This may even be true of poets. Before Seamus Heaney received the Nobel Prize, for example, his faculty title was Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory, a title Harvard took quite seriously. Among Heaney's duties, aside from teaching Yeats and the occasional verse workshop, was chairing a committee to select the best public speaker in the graduating class. Only after Heaney received the Nobel Prize in Literature did Harvard officially acknowledge that he was a creative artist by naming him Ralph Waldo Emerson Poet in Residence (for the two years he's held the chair, ironically, he's been in "residence" in Ireland).

Similarly, for decades, the poet-playwright William Alfred taught both medieval literature and a playwriting course in the Harvard English department. When he retired some five or six years ago, he was replaced, not by a poet or a playwright, but by a medievalist. A permanent course in playwriting, irregularly taught by visiting lecturers since, has been suspended

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for the past five years, although for two of those years the English Department did co-sponsor Spike Lee to teach a course in screenwriting. (When I asked why playwriting, with its obvious roots in English literature—Shakespeare most obviously—had been replaced by the myth and magic of the movies in the English Department, I was told that Spike Lee would attract a lot of new students to the department.)

Harvard now offers a concentration in Creative Writing and awards Briggs-Copeland Lectureships to those who teach it. Slowly, glacially, thanks to the openness of the last two administrations, arts education is creeping into the Yard, past the cadres of Switzers manning the gates. Nevertheless, those gates are still heavily guarded. It is true the university can boast a Department of Music which offers a few courses in composition and orchestration. But undergraduate music majors do most of their work in such theory and history classes as Eighteenth-Century Performance Practice and Ethnomusicology. Largely thanks to a new director, Ellen Phalan, Harvard now also provides an excellent curriculum in drawing, painting, and photography at the Carpenter Center. It is administered not by a Department of Art but by a species called "Visual and Environmental Studies." How do you paint landscapes or still lifes in a department called "Visual and Environmental Studies"? It's as if such frivolities as studio practice had to be smuggled in as more purposeful subjects such as exploring the optic nerve and preserving ecology.

There are, of course, a variety of other educational institutions in the Cambridge/Boston area, Boston University, Tufts, and Emerson College for example, which offer professional arts training on the undergraduate level, sometimes leading to a Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.). This degree is rarely offered by the elite universities. At Yale and other such institutions, undergraduates in the arts usually matriculate in special departments or concentrations leading to a B.A. degree; but they must supplement courses in their major with a variety of other disciplines, including the sciences, social sciences, history, and literature, on the premise that anyone planning a career in the arts would benefit from general knowledge in a broad range of subjects. This premise is sensible enough, even, I would say, inarguable, as long as students are allowed to study legitimate disciplines (some of the arcane theories now in vogue pull them so far afield that they can graduate from college virtually uneducated in their fields). At Harvard, the options for someone interested in the arts are even narrower. Among Harvard alumni have been a number of very talented artists in music and theater—Yo Yo Ma, Stockard Channing, and John Lithgow, among others, and, more recently, Matt Damon and Elizabeth Shue. But none of these was ever given much chance to practice his or her profession during school hours.

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Although it is now possible to major in some academic version of music and visual arts at Harvard, the university still does not offer a major in theater. There have been some rumbles lately about creating a theater concentration. It may very well run into faculty opposition and possibly into student opposition as well. At Harvard, where the cult of the amateur is virtually enshrined, the word "professionalism" and the verb "professionalize" are more often used as epithets than honorifics. I have heard faculty members talk in hushed tones about a student production of Shakespeare or Sophocles in one of the resident houses as if it were far superior to anything produced by the Royal Shakespeare Company or the Greek National Theatre. On the model of such English universities as Cambridge and Oxford, Harvard prefers its scholars to be gentlemen and gentlewomen, and its arts to be recreational. The actual practice of music, dance, and painting—aside from a scattering of studio courses—is largely left to clubs, orchestras, and choruses.

For decades, undergraduate interest in theater had been accommodated by a self-generating extracurricular association known as the HDC, later the HRDC, or Harvard-Radcliffe Drama Club, along with a host of other student producing organizations, such as the Gilbert and Sullivan Society, Black CAST, independent productions at the Agassiz Theater under the supervision of Radcliffe's Office of the Arts, and Harvard's resident houses. When the financier John Loeb contributed money to Harvard to build a new performance space, it was dedicated largely to undergraduate theater activity, even though the main auditorium turned out to be too vast to accommodate the relatively untrained skills of undergraduates. As a result, a typical HRDC production plays to about 75 people in a hall seating 556.

How then does one explain the anomaly of the American Repertory Theater at Harvard? The bringing of this professional theater to the university and my appointment as director of the Loeb Drama Center were accomplished partly to help improve the quality of HRDC shows on the main stage, whether through practical courses in the craft of acting and directing or through professional guidance of HRDC productions. But there has always been a structural fault in the position of the director of the Loeb, namely that the title has no real meaning. From the first, we were working with an undergraduate club that wanted to retain its traditional independence and autonomy, and that sometimes regarded the presence of the ART company as that of usurpers. The HRDC is one of the very few extracurricular organizations that has no professional or faculty supervision. It is said that undergraduates fear the "professionalization" of undergraduate drama. But improving the quality of production on the main stage through ART supervision or anybody else's supervision is no more to "professionalize" this extracurricular activity than a coach "professionalizes" the Harvard

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football team or a faculty conductor "professionalizes" the Harvard Chorus. It is, indeed, the very essence of an educational institution to have trained professionals (in other words, faculty and others) function in a tutorial and teaching relationship to unusually talented students.

There is a good argument to be made against overly-specialized arts training on the undergraduate level in a liberal arts university. I sometimes make it myself if such training is either excessive or superficial. It's a question of degree. A theater-obsessed student is not going to be properly educated if every university hour is dedicated to theatrical activities. On the other hand, how effective can a course in acting be if it meets only three hours a week? Professional acting training requires at least forty weekly contact hours to be serious. True, a few hours properly used can help correct bad habits. And that is also enough time to introduce the aspiring theater student to the materials of the field, namely plays. Those planning a theater career after graduation would certainly be better prepared as professionals were they more familiar with theater history and dramatic literature. I have often been struck by the ignorance of certain professional actors, some of them in my own company, who when offered the part, say, of Shylock or Iago, tell me they first have to read the play. What were they reading as undergraduates?

So it is possible to argue against too much as well as too little professionalism on the undergraduate level. But what argument can explain the absence at Harvard of graduate professional schools in the arts? Harvard does have a Graduate School of Design. The title is misleading. The Design School is essentially devoted to architecture and city planning. Almost alone among America's leading educational institutions, Harvard has no schools in the arts. The reason usually offered is that professional schools are too "vocational." True enough. So are the Law School, the Medical School, and the Business School. The real argument, I suspect, is not over vocationalism so much as over the kind of vocationalism. Artists are notoriously bad breadwinners, and arts schools are traditionally far behind in their annual contributions to the Alumni Fund.

Harvard's attitude towards the practical arts has had a long history. In the 1920s, George Pierce Baker gave his celebrated English 47 Workshop Playwriting class at Harvard. It was an elective in the English department. Although one faculty member compared it to a course in "butchering meat," Baker's dramatic instruction was effective enough to attract the likes of Eugene O'Neill, Philip Barry, and S. N. Behrman to Cambridge. But when Baker requested a space in which to stage scenes from the plays of his students, the administration balked. It was too vocational, too professional. A wealthy donor from the Harkness family thereupon offered Harvard what was then the munificent sum of a million dollars to build a

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drama department for Baker. Harvard turned down the bequest. Baker took the money to Yale where he founded what was later to be called the Yale School of Drama.

The Yale School of Drama, like Yale Schools of Music and Art and Architecture, is a graduate-professional school designed to offer opportunities for training in the practice of the arts, as the Medical School offers training in the practice of medicine and the Law School in the practice of jurisprudence. This is accomplished through course work and laboratory practice, which is to say through training in the classroom and work on the stage, sometimes in association with the professional Yale Repertory Theater. After three years, this culminates in a Master of Fine Arts (M.F.A.) degree for dramaturgs, and for critics a D.F.A. degree. While all of these Yale schools offer some opportunities for undergraduate participation, their curriculum is primarily designed for would-be professionals.

Lacking a department of drama or even a drama concentration, Harvard was understandably reluctant to accept a graduate-professional school of drama on the Yale model. When the American Repertory Theater came to Harvard from Yale in 1979, we originally proposed such a model for actors, directors, and dramaturgs connected to the theater. We were advised that the idea would never fly. It wasn't until 1987, noting the incidence at Harvard of Institutes (the Nieman Institute, the Bunting Institute, and so forth), that we submitted the proposal again, under the name of the ART Institute for Advanced Theater Training. Partly because we had stumbled on the proper terminology, we were then permitted to develop a training program in acting, directing, and dramaturgy, provided we asked for no money from the administration and provided we offered no advanced degree. (Institute students do receive their M.F.A. now from the Moscow Art Theatre School, an institution with which the ART is currently affiliated.)

The appearance of the American Repertory Theater at Harvard in 1979 was an unprecedented event. It represented the establishment of the only permanent professional arts organization on campus. The ART was also responsible then for the first undergraduate credit courses in theater in Harvard's history—in acting, directing, and dramaturgy, given by professional members of the company with teaching experiences. These were offered on the assumption that the best teachers in any artistic field were its practitioners. The courses were approved in what was considered to be record time, thanks to the enthusiasm of President Bok and Dean Henry Rosovsky and thanks to the momentum of the occasion.

There is no question that the presence of the ART represented and represents a chink in the wall of the faculty's resistance to studio courses in theater, though the chink was quickly filled with plaster provisos. For

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example, the courses were accepted with a restriction that was being applied to all other practical studio courses on campus—namely that they be related in some way to texts. This proviso—popularly known as the Bakanowsky guidelines after the genial professor of architecture who invented them—reaffirmed Harvard's commitment to academic study as opposed to mere practice, by making certain that the practice was in some way allied to reading.

The ART instructors found no difficulty assigning texts to students in their acting, directing, and dramaturgy classes. We already believed that these theatrical disciplines were a valuable alternative way to understand dramatic literature. It goes without saying that the plays of Shakespeare and Chekhov are as important to theater professionals as Mozart and Beethoven scores are to professionals in music. Nevertheless, a few members of the faculty inevitably began to complain that we were not following the rules, that the Bakanowsky guidelines were designed to refer not only to primary sources such as plays, but also to secondary sources such as critical commentaries and theories. They wanted courses in practical skills to be supplemented not only with readings in literature but with reading lists in literary theory.

It would seem from this that artists who teach make certain academics very nervous, unless they also have credentials as theorists. As one report recently put it, "Many specialists in drama and performances today would strenuously resist the idea that there is significant merit in the notion of a split between theorists and practitioners, between analysis and art." The same academic report goes on to question whether acting training, for example, can properly be taught by people solely interested in what it scornfully calls "aesthetics and creativity." Theater should be considered not only a practical skill but an academic discipline influenced by "cultural context, politics, cultural differences, and global technology." The attention of the student should be drawn not only to offerings in dramatic literature—which appear in the catalogue in ever-decreasing numbers—but also to such agenda-driven courses as "The Homosexual in Drama," "Performance and Performativity," "Gender and Gender Studies," and the like. In the modern university, art is not so much banished from the campus as swallowed up by fashionable political digestive systems.

It would be interesting to learn what Meryl Streep or Kevin Kline or Cherry Jones or any of the many gifted professionals whose early careers were shaped in graduate or undergraduate training programs might say were they to be told that their acting owed a debt to global technology or cultural differences. At any rate, such assertions reflect the continuing tension between the humanist and the artist, between a liberal arts education and a liberal education in the arts. For a long while I used to attribute this

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tension, at least in my own field, to what the movie critic David Denby has identified as "theaterophobia," and what the late Jonas Barish in his book of the same name called *The Anti-Theatrical Prejudice*. Barish traced this affliction back to Plato. But he found its defining event in the closing of the English theaters during the Puritan interregnum. Harvard, like the state of Massachusetts, was founded by those very same Puritans, fleeing England after the restoration of Charles II. That fact accounts for a lot of the bad blood that still exists there between those who practice and those who theorize, except in music, which the Puritans and Harvard consider sacred.

Perhaps the best theatrical representation of this conflict is in Molière's *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, where the eponymous hero, the social-climber Monsieur Jordain, is taught the theoretical rudiments of the arts—how to dance, sing, fence, philosophize, and write love letters—by a group of specialists in each field. He discovers that he can perform each skill much better than the experts, simply by doing it. Jourdain not only learns that he has been speaking prose all his life; he also proves that he can write prose with more directness and simplicity than the most learned pedagogue. Molière, like his twentieth-century cousin, Eugène Ionesco, had an artist's suspicion of the over-intellectualized beliefs of his age.

It is amazing to me that humanists stand in such an ambiguous relationship to artists, considering that it is the work of poets, novelists, and dramatists that constitutes the grist of their endeavors. Obviously, there would be no analysis or criticism—no deconstruction, semiotics, or gender theory—without the existence of artworks to spin theories about.

To me, the greatest obligation of education in relation to the arts—and I'm speaking now of education from the secondary school level through the college years—is to create some appreciation for and understanding of the arts rather than competition with them. Whitman believed that great artists required great audiences. The education system has signally failed to create the great audiences that might understand, support, and maintain great works of art in this country.

The failure is on every level. Whereas arts education used to be a staple of the grammar school education, funding for such arts programs in the schools is now very erratic. For who is the first to get fired when money is short, but the music teacher? The only way to stimulate appreciation for quality is through arts education in the schools, an area that has been unconscionably neglected, though some of Walter Annenberg's recent grants have been helpful. Effective projects like the Teachers and Writers Collaborative of New York City, in which poor kids are introduced to language and poetry by practicing poets, are very rare, and they're privately subsidized. No wonder the infrequent visit of a dance company on a grant leaves children baffled and sullen when the system employs so few

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full-time arts teachers to stimulate their imaginations. This is not only a cultural but a social problem. Lacking early grounding in music, drama, and painting, kids will inevitably spend their time watching action movies and playing computer games, and, when they grow up, will only be able to appease the instinctive hunger for art, music, and poetry with the easily digested fast food of rap, rock, and grafitti.

Undergraduates can be stretched in the arts not just through practice in extracurricular activities, but through being exposed to professional performance, including the literature of the field and the practical skills associated with it. After such a continuum of artistic exposure, whether as a member of the audience or as a practitioner or both, the serious student of the arts would then be prepared to enter an appropriate graduate-professional school for more advanced training in his or her chosen field. It is an ideal vertical arrangement that could potentially train the ideal spectator and the ideal artist. The system in operation today produces neither—only arrogant amateurs and ignorant professionals.

When McNeil Lowry was vice president in charge of the Arts Program at the Ford Foundation, he refused to fund any cultural initiatives associated with a university, in the belief that they were bound to be of low quality and informed by amateur standards. Neither I nor anyone else could ever persuade him otherwise, even through demonstrated artistic achievement over a period of years. We could never convince him that a society that had so little opportunity to find satisfying artistic experiences in the popular media might discover those cultural resources in institutions of higher learning. I'm not quite ready to concede that Lowry was correct in his belief that the university would always exalt the amateur over the professional, that the cultural (as opposed to the educational) standards of academia would always be as indifferent to excellence as those in the world at large. I'm also not ready to admit that the university has ceased to function as an alternative to society and instead has begun to endorse its careerist, pragmatic values. That is, not quite yet. But I'm coming awfully close.

Bernard Avishai: I want to make two preliminary remarks. Reading between the lines, there are two assumptions that have been made about markets, corporations, and so forth. The first is that markets demand—corporations demand—as they always have, over-specialized, philistine, utilitarian, cynically anti-intellectual people. And the second is that the new technologies contribute to the philistinization of our children, that these technologies are in some way continuous with the mass media, the enervation of our children. I think these assumptions are not just wrong but the opposite of the truth. What I'm about to say will get back to these two points.

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The welfare state is in crisis, not because of deficits, not only because of greed, and not even because, as Oscar Wilde said, socialism required too many evenings. It is in crisis because the capitalism against which it arose is in crisis, and has been superseded by technologies that are so transformative it is a privilege to be alive to witness them. Information technologies are changing the terms of competition in business. And they're changing the education necessary for students to be employed. To grasp these changes look at what has happened to what we used to call "labor."

1. *Labor is a fast diminishing part of value.* In the 1950s, the cost of a car included about 55 percent direct labor. Today, less than 11 percent. There is a revolution underneath that deceptively simple number. Blue-collar jobs have been made redundant by robotics, flexible machine tools, automated inventory management systems, others by moving to low-wage countries. White-collar jobs, correspondingly, have been made redundant by scheduling, order entry, spreadsheet software, word-processing, and dozens of other kinds of software—and more recently by the growth of corporate intranets, the use of the Internet to transform and transfer corporate know-how from one part of the world to the other. Middle management is disappearing. Some have called this a revolution in reengineering. It is really a revolution in computer-integrated production, and we are only at its beginning. While the market capitalization of the Fortune 500 has grown three- or four-fold since the early 1980s, their workforces have shrunk by 25 percent.

2. *Lost jobs? Good riddance.* Remember Michael Dukakis's promise of "good jobs at good wages." His campaign now seems quaint. The new entrepreneurial economy—the technology companies with five hundred employees or less—is responsible for virtually all job growth since 1988, and no federal industrial policy—which one could read between the lines of Dukakis's campaign—could have precipitated this dynamism. Investors, not the government, have been picking winners and losers, and on the whole have not done a bad job of it, especially with the help of transformed financial services companies. Businesses, not Departments of Defense, have made the necessary investments in crucial technologies. But what Dukakis neglected to add was that the "good" jobs he wanted to assure through government industrial policy were mainly boring, soul-destroying, and intellectually demeaning—production line assemblers, data processors, the kinds of jobs that were the hallmark of the old manufacturing. Frederick Winslow Taylor once wrote that the best businesses were the ones in which workers "left their heads at home." He was right, which explains why socialism had always seemed so magical for people who could not bring it off. Anyway, much of this dehumanizing work is impossible in the new economy. Manufacturing and service businesses want many

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fewer workers, but they want them all to be literate, numerate, to be able to engage in team-based problem solving. They want a scientific mind for production, an empathic heart for their fellow workers, for customers. They know that manufacturing matters, but that developing a piece of scheduling software for a plant in Taiwan is manufacturing. All in all, this new style of work is significantly more satisfying than what it has replaced.

3. *The game into which workers are recruited has changed.* The new technologies have changed the rules of management: the old division of labor that supported mass production has been replaced by more integrative approaches, what we call interfunctional teamwork, knowledge sharing. A business's most important asset is its "intellectual capital." I myself am Director of Intellectual Capital at KBMG. Intellectual capital is the competencies of employees that allow them to be innovative, to be learners throughout their lives, not just specialists. They must also understand the business's strategy. Companies used to be like a football team, in which only senior managers, like quarterbacks, saw the whole field, and most everybody else performed a single task. Bigness mattered. Now companies have to be more like a basketball team—or I might add like a theater arts company—lean, disciplined in spontaneity. Marketing, design, and production people take on problems together; senior managers must be more like a point guard or a director. Communication is horizontal, not vertical. Networks are replacing hierarchy. The corporate office looks much more like a holding company, a teaching center, or a bank than a command center.

4. *Labor's real crisis is not unemployment but unemployability.* Of course the only thing worse than a boring job is no job, which is why some people—opponents of NAFTA, or the critics of outsourcing, for example—view the loss of old industrial jobs with alarm. Their concerns are reasonable. Their solutions are not. Don't be fooled by apparent fluctuations, last year's "downsizing" or this year's drop in unemployment. For the first time in the history of industrial labor markets, the problem for unskilled people is not cyclical unemployment but chronic unemployability. The bottom rungs of the ladder are disappearing; protection and macro-economic "stimulation" packages and so forth can do nothing to change this trend. When I was a teenager, we would hear about friends who dropped out of high school to start a family and "go to work." Actually, in any largely Jewish neighborhood, we didn't hear about that too much. Today the idea would be ludicrous. For people with reasonably sophisticated skills, the job market will always recover: Lazard Freres for example has found that during the recovery of 1994-96, 1.5 million jobs were created for every million jobs lost, and most of the new ones in small businesses. But people without skills will be heartbroken. The days of UAW people making $18 an hour with nothing but a couple of years of high school are gone.

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5. *Unskilled labor is no longer being compensated, and can never be compensated by a dignified wage.* Advocates for protection and stimulation can, to be sure, create a demand for some low end jobs in the short run. But nobody can raise a family on what these jobs pay. And the problem will get worse. Simple and repetitive jobs for semi-skilled or non-skilled persons are going to be even more pressured by new software or by contractor-suppliers in China, Brazil, and so forth. The result will be tragic inequalities. The *Harvard Business Review* has worried about the development of an "apartheid economy" in advanced industrial economies for good reason. Income inequalities are growing. According to *HBR,* between the early 1970s and the mid-1990s, real income in the top deciles has grown about 5 percent while it has declined about 15 percent in the bottom deciles. College graduates earned about 43 percent more than high-school graduates did twenty years ago. They are earning 82 percent more today. The gap is widening.

6. *Labor unions will not make a difference.* It is precisely because direct labor used to be so simple, mechanical, and yet critical to value creation (what business people call "value creation," what Adam Smith meant by "exchange value," not value in use) that labor unions made sense. Unions were a way for workers to get needed leverage in wage negotiation, and, let's face it, a psychological lift from solidarity. One could speak of "categories" of workers because tasks were elementary and skills pathetically interchangeable. Unions were also a way for companies to negotiate a predictable supply of labor for a set period, though it took some growing up for management to learn this lesson. Anyway, the logic behind unions may still apply to some kinds of work—fast-food servers, apparel assemblers, hospital orderlies. But, again, any simple and repetitive job that requires little individual creativity will become a prime target for computer-integrative technologies as the years go by. No wonder less than 15 percent of workers are in unions today, whereas 35 percent of workers were in unions in the 1960s.

These changes in the circumstances of labor have been both very much for the better and very much for the worse. They have meant virtually all employees in our companies will have the chance for more agreeable work than factory "hands" ever did. As barriers to entry drop in every industry, equality of opportunity is more assured than ever before. But equality of result seems much less assured. The number of people any individual company needs per dollar of sales is declining rapidly. People who are seen to create value will do very well. People who cannot will be in trouble. An "up or out" dynamic is taking over the management of knowledge businesses. And many companies, consulting organizations, and so forth have borrowed tenure-like procedures from universities although they don't award tenure, just its denial.

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These changes have presented democracy with more exciting opportunities and more terrible dangers than ordinary citizens have ever had to face before. On the positive side, one can see a true Jeffersonian republic taking shape, in which cyberspace presents a forever opening frontier, and nobody has to become a machine for somebody else. The outlines of this new republic are already visible in Silicon Valley, Tech Square in Cambridge, Austin, Texas, or in Haifa, Israel. Imagine an end to degrading work, imagine how the basic skills of business reinforce the basic skills of democratic citizenship, skills like the capacity to navigate and analyze complex streams of information, the wit to make a succinct presentation, the acuity to read critically, write persuasively, organize materials, and communicate one's views.

And yet, whom are we kidding? People who haven't the equivalent of college level skills cannot hope even to get through the doors of companies like Motorola, General Motors, Fidelity, or any of the start-ups of the new economy. But I think we can safely assume from basic literacy figures that at least 25 percent of the current U.S. workforce is not sufficiently educated to be qualified for work that would pay enough to sustain the middle-class life of, say, Archie Bunker. If you think about who votes or reads newspapers, we might be talking about 40 percent.

All of this means that twenty or thirty million people—people with children, people hobbled by dullness and self-doubt, people who played by the rules which evaporated from the time they were fifteen to the time they were thirty-five—are hard pressed to see a future. Or make sense of the past. After all, the school system we conceived, the union movements we adjusted to, the "leading" economic indicators we tracked, the government programs we put in place—did not assume that virtually every member of society would need the equivalent of college just to get a job.

Something dramatic will have to be done, and market forces alone cannot be trusted. Markets are fair by definition, but markets are not life. People cannot be expected to think that they deserve their fate simply because they were born into changing competitive rules. This is the only life they will live.

What is business's responsibility in this crisis, its problem? Social dislocation certainly makes problems for business. But that is not what most people mean when they try to enlist business in solutions. They mean that the crisis is caused by the actions of business, and it is up to business to make things better. They see businesses laying off workers or refusing to hire the undereducated. They see growing profits, the rising salaries of entrepreneurial executives, the growth of foreign operations. They imagine what a force for social good individual companies could be if only they acted "responsibly."

This kind of argument confuses cause with effect. But it is especially strong in cities where very strong global corporations have a long history

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of trying to be what we quaintly call "good corporate citizens"—Ford in Detroit, Motorola in Chicago, Coca-Cola in Atlanta, Levi-Straus in San Francisco. Ironically, the more enlightened companies are, the more they contribute to public confusion. For example, our best companies do aspire to be teaching organizations in their own realm, investing as much as 2 or 3 percent of their payroll in training and retraining employees. They invest more than many universities in leading technologies. They aim to attract talent with excellent wellness and childcare benefits. They institute programs that encourage employees to speak their minds. They institute profit sharing and stock-purchase programs.

No wonder that people outside of our best corporations get the idea that businesses are social institutions devised to further the intellectual and spiritual development of employees. From a certain naive angle, companies look like introverted welfare mini-states which need only to be forced to share their wealth with the rest of us.

However, companies were never designed to be engines of social good. Rather, competition among companies was designed to do that. The mandate of any business is to survive, and this is becoming harder and harder as the market boundaries between companies and countries blur.

I am not being mean-spirited. Yes, now and then, companies can spare some funds for public purposes—public broadcasting, local schools. But we have to acknowledge that the managers of businesses have done what they have done, cut what they have cut, reengineered when they could, and taught what they have taught simply to remain viable. Even CEOs who emphasize "corporate values" are really speaking of what it takes to make the company more competitive; when they speak of in-house freedom of speech they really mean something like what Mr. Gorbachev meant by glasnost. Greed, too, is beside the point here. But survival is what most managers mean by self-interest. And nobody would want their pension funds invested in companies that act like social agencies. I'm sure that's true of everyone in this room.

What, then, can be done about the chronically unemployable? What can businesses do? I would say that a new social compact is not really necessary as some have suggested, but a determination to remember the old one, and to think about it more precisely and more intelligently. The old compact had always assumed that companies would self-interestedly support certain government actions to enforce the rules of competition. Government would police property rights, establish the courts to punish criminals and settle judicial disputes, build roads and bridges, defend borders and so forth. The mutual obligations of companies and governments were specified from the start in *The Wealth of Nations* and haven't really

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changed. But in one crucial respect, the old compact needs an amendment—in the part that has to do with education.

The old compact assumed that government would educate children to be qualified for work, and that businesses would go along. But to be qualified for a factory job, all that was necessary was literacy, if that. Smith had assumed from the start that most youths would barely be taught "to read, write, and account," knowing that little had changed in two hundred years. Smith knew this was a shame but also that education would be wasted on most. One of his lines should be haunting us: "The man whose whole life is spent in performing a few simple operations has no occasion to exercise his invention, or exert his understanding. . . .He naturally becomes. . .as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become."

In the new economy, however, this cannot go on. Businesses have an inexhaustible need for cultivated people. Our best companies cannot grow fully into global opportunities because they cannot hire the people they need. This does not mean that businesses can become responsible for education. They invest more and more in training, but they cannot make their employees trainable. Businesses are more like specialized graduate schools than elementary schools; they need people ready to learn—marketing, design, production strategies, ready to learn high technologies or quality systems. Companies cannot teach the basics. At the same time, there are a number of things businesses can do:

1. The first thing businesses can do is to stop complaining about higher taxes targeted to education. These are fundamental investments, and it makes no sense to look at higher taxes as a problem if these amount to an investment in the intellectual capital businesses themselves need.

Governments spend upwards of a quarter of a trillion dollars nationwide on schools of all kinds. To mentor the young people who are in danger of falling through the cracks, they will need to fund hundreds more pre-school centers, hundreds of small boarding schools, hundreds of wellness facilities, thousands of Outward Bound types of programs. They will need to fund hundreds of experimental charter schools (even if this means defying teachers unions), and a new educational on-line network. They will need to subsidize university tuition and create Boys Towns and Girls Towns for lost adolescents from the inner city. Finally, like the Israelis, they will need to organize twelve months of universal mandatory national service after high school graduation. Israel's Defense Forces have proven a kind of finishing school for the recruits of the new economy.

2. Businesses must become demanding customers. Many businesses have been helping local school boards to understand the kind of curricula they should institute to prepare children for work. Motorola, to name one, spends as much as five million dollars a year on cooperative programs with

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K-12 and community colleges. Schools are often surprised to learn that what businesses really want are not one-dimensional technocrats, but graduates with a rounded understanding of classic texts, who know how to argue and listen, who know foreign languages. In any case, businesses cannot sit on the sidelines and let curricular decisions be made by people who have only stereotyped images of what companies need. I know one large insurance company that sponsors a school-to-work program, in which about twenty local high school students come to its headquarters a few times a week to take classes and do odd jobs. The people who run the program assure me that the teachers who accompany the students are the real beneficiaries of this exposure. Beyond this, the agenda for school reform is ambitious and familiar: performance measures, new curricula, devolution of authority

3. Businesses should get into education. A company that is a learning organization is also a teaching organization. There is no reason why virtually any substantial company shouldn't be thinking about the business of teaching, of ways to offer services to children and teens and profit from the enormous education market that is taking shape before our eyes. Granted, not every company could set up a school in the context of the growing charter school movement, or even a vocational center. However, all major companies will have to develop teaching materials—theoretical articles, multimedia software, instructional films, on-line simulations, and so forth—which reflect their peculiar competitive experiences. There is no reason why companies cannot market these products to school boards and universities, to new entrepreneurial teaching enterprises, and to families. The point is to make competition in teaching as robust as possible. We should be thinking about ways of instructing that are as creative as the ways of selling. For example, I have never seen a more sophisticated research organization into teen-age culture than the Coca-Cola Corporation. They invest more in the anthropology of the teen-age years than any university department in the world and have some of the most charming, sophisticated, and intelligent people working there. Such people could make a good profit creating a program or a multi-media experience that teaches geography, like "Carmen Sandiego" does to younger kids. I'm not talking about altruism, but about helping people learn.

4. Shame on us. It is also time to acknowledge that commercial television is mostly a disgrace, and that companies are responsible for it. Children will see as many a hundred thousand commercials before they come of age. These commercials are often just ways of selling. When Mr. Gingrich accused public television of not taking sufficient advantage of ways to license "Barney," how many of us thought, "Take advantage of whom?" We've implied to children that having stuff, now, is the point. We

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throw cheap thrills at them to get their attention. We turn them into couch potatoes who never quite test their own powers. We treat them like consumers of value, and then the business world is amazed when they show up for work without the capacity to be producers of value. I am not for censoring the media. But I am for CEOs speaking out publicly as critics of their own and each others' commercials, marketing campaigns, and sponsorships when these demean public discourse or undermine parents. Freedom of speech means that individuals cannot be silenced by a conformist majority. But it also means, as John Stuart Mill insisted, that a majority is free to try to make individuals feel ashamed of tactless, salacious, or just plain dumb things. I am tired of hearing how parents have the responsibility to "turn off the set." Parents should not have to hover over the electronic gateways of their homes twenty-four hours a day to keep out junk.

5. Make work in education. No matter how quickly we turn to mentoring our young people, there will be millions of people of our own generation who will never really be employable in the new economy. Their basic skills are not up to the environment of a knowledge economy. The revolution in standards for basic skills has come when they are too old for it. We can either insist that their bleak prospects are their own fault, and cast them into a scramble for survival, as people of the Third World do, or we can endeavor to employ them on public works projects which add to the environment of mentoring and cultivation we are trying to create for our children: building new parks, new schools, new transport, new fiber networks. The downside of such spending is obvious. But the upside is too: not only a more attractive place to live and a reduced rate of crime, but improved chances for families to stay together. The Harvard sociologist William Julius Wilson has observed that men with jobs are nine times more likely to stay in their families than are men who are unemployed. Do we really want to continue to absorb the consequences of abandoned families as a "cost of doing business"?

C. Vann Woodward: I feel obliged to protest a phrase used by our distinguished last speaker. It would take an essay that I haven't written or thought through. The phrase is "practical knowledge." I mean, the identification of knowledge and learning as utilitarian. This gives the conveying and absorbing of knowledge a commercial aspect or purpose. I can understand the wishes of those who want to do that. We've had our institutions of learning throughout history put into the hands of various kinds of institutions, such as religious ones, whose purpose is to instill doctrines in faith. More recently we've had political organizations to instill political purposes. I strongly prefer the idea of learning, of education, as defined by our second speaker, as an enrichment of the mind without political, commercial, or economic, or religious purposes.

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Bernard Avishai: Kant said that things that are ends in themselves have a dignity and things that are means to other ends have a price. I think that in the last two hundred years we have always been struggling with the question of how things that have a dignity also have a price. Smith tried to get at the distinction between use value and exchange value, and so forth. People in educational institutions always have this ambiguous mandate and so do the institutions themselves. On the one hand to invite people into an experience which is an end in itself and on the other hand to qualify them to earn a living. I'm trying to make the point that for the first time in history the institutions that are inviting students to make a living are inviting them first and foremost to enjoy the experience that's an end in itself. Twenty-five years ago this was not so because corporations then were big hierarchical structures in which a great many people were required not only to leave their heads at home but to engage in highly specialized activities and were not required to exercise their judgment in the ways cultivated people do. That's no longer the case. The line between the intellectual and the manager is blurrier. It's important that we understand that it is no longer a contradiction to worry about the cultivation of our children in the context of the ways in which they will make a living.

Jon Westling: Just a brief comment. I think we are very fortunate to have had the papers we've heard in this session. We have heard from Professor Deppe-Wolfinger what might be called the pure gospel of the welfare state, the ethos that was characteristic of much of this century's advanced thought about the way in which we ought to organize ourselves in groups; and from Professor Avishai the pure gospel of the world of contemporary business, the technozealotry that excites CEOs and increasingly stock holders. But it's probably incumbent on us to remember that between these two rather different approaches to the world, in education we must always deal with the individual student. We have the almost-parental responsibility to bring him along into the civilized order and, regardless of whether one thinks that universities ought to be fully supported by state funds and entirely protected from market forces or whether one thinks that the way of the future is a market-driven competition between and among universities and corporations and consulting firms, Kant's old questions have to be addressed. What can I know? (What are the limits? What is the area in which intellectual life can actually make true or plausibly true statements?) What must I do? (What are the obligations that inhere upon me by virtue of being human, by virtue of being a member of society?) What may I hope? (What is our destiny as we can dimly see it?) Those questions still have got to be addressed regardless of the new technologies. The individual student must still be our central focus and, unless we succeed one

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by one with the formation of the mind and the character of the students, all else is lost.

Edith Kurzweil: I think you're really addressing in a very global way the kind of confusion we have to live with, that in the university we have to teach also about commerce and in the corporation we have the commercialization of learning.

Nathan Glazer: This is a very good group of papers even though they all went in different directions. But I want to follow up on Bernard Avishai's paper and his vision of the world. I do appreciate it, at least from reading the business sections of papers, though less from experience with that world. To judge from some telephone calls by people who want to sell me something, they don't seem to be engaged in imaginative team playing when trying to sell me their products. Anyway, it's hard to make the case that increasing the sales of Coca-Cola, with all the imagination that goes into it, is important. In other words, there seems to be a contradiction between the kind of skills and ingenuity you describe, which is certainly better than the assembly line, and their, let us say, ultimate ends.

Bernard Avishai: The question you raise is the only part of this discussion that really isn't new because to a great extent that defines the modern experience. People struggle with the question of why they were put on earth. You're constantly raising questions about whether or not you're a means to some end or whether you have a dignity that's an end in itself. I was trying to speak about this from the mentality of a company, not from what a reasonable human being asks, because a company is not a person. I was trying to ask what companies that have a mandate to make sugared water, and have made a living making sugared water, can do to use their in-house skill, their insight, to help educate young people. I think some of them can and may do this with as much imagination as schools. It's what McMillan does when it puts out the Encyclopedia Brittanica, which is a business. So why do we think of, for instance, Houghton Mifflin when it puts out the Dictionary of X, Y, Z, which by the way now is integrated into Microsoft products? Both Houghton Mifflin and Coca-Cola are businesses. That's not to say that I would go to Coca-Cola to find out the definition of a human being.

Stanley Rothman: I have two questions for Bernard. The first: in *Chronicles* there recently appeared stories about corporations establishing chairs at various universities in order to really teach people how to work with their products or learn new things. What you think of this? Second:

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evidence seems to be building up that the real issues for many people emerge in the first one to three years of life, that you must catch them at that point, that no matter what you do later on they won't be able to catch up. That doesn't apply to everybody, but to a large number of people. In that sense, it seems to me, your prescriptions weren't radical enough. No one seems to want to get at that group, so I wonder whether increasing funds for education will do that much good for a substantial number of people.

Bernard Avishai: I don't think I'm the best person to address that question to. Mr. Westling should have a crack at that. But I want to add something else. The lines between corporations and private institutions of higher education are getting crossed more and more, not because universities are changing but because corporations are. Motorola, for instance, has its own university. It is a virtual campus that teaches about one hundred thousand people a year, in some things that are specific to Motorola, others people will take with them, software education particularly. A Motorola software programmer is obsolete in five years unless he keeps learning. He can then go to a competitor instead of going to Northwestern University or to MIT. Now, Motorola has been interested in investing with universities to develop various programs and many universities would be happy to have such a kissing relationship with a company. The nomination of chairs is another issue. When I said that the corporations should stop bitching about higher taxes, I did so from a kind of evangelical fervor, to rescue our young kids no matter how much it costs. Maybe Dr. Westling has a comment.

Jon Westling: Obviously, this is a complicated subject. You're quite right: I can think of no good reason why a college or university would accept a gift to create a chair for an individual or individuals to be named by somebody outside the institution. I don't wish to state that there could never be such a case that would be justifiable. Of course, I spend much of my time begging for corporations and foundations and wealthy individuals to endow chairs, and I'm always willing to listen to views of donors. But to give them actual control or veto power would be very damaging to colleges and universities. I agree with you and with Professor Avishai about the terrible situation that exists, particularly in our inner cities, where we have millions and millions of young people who've barely been touched not only by the educational system but by our civilization except through the mass media. I think this is one of the great tragedies of our time and we will be judged for not having done enough. I myself, however, do not have a solution.

Robert Brustein: It seems to me there is no precedent to assume that corporations will function generously and altruistically to try to improve society.

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It seems to me their basic function is to make money. There's a side issue which is to improve their image when they're making too much money and are resented for it. When the Fords and the Rockefellers and the Mellons died, they contributed a lot of their money to essentially altruistic foundations, so indirectly corporations or businesses function in an altruistic manner. You see something like this in the theater. The difference between commercial theater and non-commercial theater is very clear. Commercial theater is primarily in the business of making money and every decision is made accordingly, which is to choose your star, to choose the play you think is going to appeal to the lowest common denominator, to stall the star's entrance until a certain point when the applause will be loudest, to choose your directors, everything. The nonprofit theater's purpose, at least in theory, is to try to make art. As a result its function, its procedures, its practices are completely different, as they are between university and business.

Rita Kramer: A few minutes ago I heard a suggestion about education in the earliest years of life. I thought there was a kind of slippery slope implication that institutions, government, corporations might handle this problem. Nobody said the awful words "day-care." But I just want to put on record that everything we know about child development, about how human beings grow into civilized or civilizable people, suggests that the earliest relationships in the life of an infant with a nurturing consistent caregiver are crucial. A relationship in which the child learns that adults are worth trying to please and that the world is a welcoming and forgiving place is something that can't be done by a village. It can't be done by a day-care center. It can't be done by anything a corporation or the government can provide. It can only be in supporting policies that, in turn, support the family structure.

Bernard Avishai: About technologies of learning that take place after the first five years of life. It's very important, I think, to distinguish between the technologies of the Internet, of websites, and so on, and those of the mass media. The skills that are necessary to navigate the Internet are much more like the skills of using the public library than they are of surfing with a remote control. The solution is not to give everybody a laptop. That's like giving them a piano and telling them to go make their living playing Brahms. These are not technologies that deskill you, that require your passive non-participation, but that invite a tremendous amount of engagement and a high degree of literacy. E-mail is not a terrible thing if it gets young people to write letters, which it does. Point and click is not a bad thing if you have to point and click your way around what is in effect a vast catalog of potential research material,

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so asking whether or not there's a website on a certain subject is not the same as asking if there is a television program about it.

Speaker: When you talk about e-mail and Internet websites, I think we should keep in mind the quality of the resources. Writing a letter, which you may keep for life and which is printable, is very different from email.

Speaker: E-mail is printable.

Bernard Avishai: Some is. But when you started playing guitar, how good were you the first two, three years? You've got to start somewhere. You're not going to print or record everything that you play on your guitar at first.

Jon Westling: All tools are what we make of them. I am old enough to remember a very similar case being made at the advent of television: the transformative effect it might have if properly used. I believe those arguments were true then just as your arguments about the potential of the new media are true now. Alas, I watch too much television and I spend too much time looking at the world wide web to think that either is likely to live up to that potential in the culture that we now must work with. But that the potential is there, I think, is certain and unarguable.

Edith Kurzweil: We'll close on this note and then we'll come back for our last session. Please come back in a few minutes.

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Session IV: Comparing Ways of Dealing with Meritocracy in Democracy

Peter Wood: Welcome back to our concluding session on "Comparing Ways of Dealing with Meritocracy and Democracy." The first speaker will be Agnès van Zanten, who is a senior researcher at Paris University, an authority on the sociology of education and the impact of educational reform on institutions. She will be speaking on "French Discussions of Immigration: The Republican Model." The second speaker is David Pryce-Jones, a novelist and historian. His books include *The Strange Death of the Soviet Union* and *The Closed Circle*. He will be speaking on "How Is England Educating its Immigrants?" Michael Meyers, who is a columnist for the *New York Post* and the executive director of the New York Civil Rights Commission, will be speaking on "What Can We Do Concretely to Achieve Equality?" And finally Nathan Glazer, who is professor in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University and the author of several books on multiculturalism, education, and social policy. He will address the issue "What Is Multiculturalism?" Professor Glazer has changed his views on this subject dramatically over the years; most recently, his book *We Are All Multiculturalists Now* suggests some of where we may go with this final topic.

Agnès van Zanten: I will talk about the Republican model in the French debate on immigrants in education. I think it is important to compare countries by taking into account their structures, economies, their political life, as well as their national ideologies—the sets of values and beliefs that frame the institutions and the political thinking of state agents and everyday citizens. Because ideologies develop in interaction with political, social, and cultural contexts, national ideologies frequently seem coherent from the inside but seem incoherent to outsiders, who may have difficulty in understanding the hidden assumptions and associations that are deeply embedded in the history of each nation-state. These ideologies are a powerful mechanism of what you would call "symbolic violence" by which one or several groups maintain their political, social, or cultural domination without resorting to force. But they also help to ensure internal cohesion, political allegiance, patriotism, and international recognition. In some countries, national ideologies remain implicit; in others they are explicitly spelled out by politicians, intellectuals, or state agents. In that case, they become national models which are then imitated, reworked, criticized, or used as a foil by other countries.

The United States and France provide an interesting comparative case of international models and they frequently look at each other in that sense. These days, whenever there is violence in French schools or when we talk about what's happening in some urban areas with immigrants, titles in newspapers, discussions in schools almost always state that "We are

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becoming more and more like America" and it's a terrible thing, or "France will never become like America. Thank God." The American model is always used. I don't think it's exactly the same for the French model in the United States, but I think it plays a role. In the United States, as in many other countries of the New World, the construction of the nation was linked from the beginning to initial and recurrent cultural competition between different immigrant groups. This resulted in the constitution of culturally dominant and culturally dominated minority groups. To deal with this problem, the United States has successively promoted different models—the "melting pot," "multiculturalism," and "affirmative action." In France the situation is different: a historically developed "high culture" has exerted a central influence to develop a national ideology of integration. At first, it served to assimilate social and regional groups and foreign populations through colonization, and since the Second World War has been applied to mass integration. This model is known as the "Republican model" because it was constructed and first applied during the Third Republic, in 1871.

The Republican model is characterized as a political regime by the disqualification of social hierarchies based on privileges acquired at birth, and the emphasis is on social mobility through work and merit. This is not so different from the American model. It also emphasizes the acquisition by new members of society of the principles and knowledge that are considered both part of the French national tradition and of the common heritage of humanity. It's not based on the idea of the construction of a "common culture" borrowing elements from different social groups. It also emphasizes access to universal principles, and is strongly related to the idea that rationality is important in the construction of citizenship. Citizenship is not conceived as a right depending on birth or on membership in social, cultural, or geographical entities, but as the result of a learning process that partly tears the child away from its family and local environment to embrace the values of the political community to which it is going to belong. Theoretically, no differences are made between men and women, between social groups, between French and immigrants. On the contrary, the French model is characterized by an explicit stance of indifference to group differences.

Another main characteristic of the Republican model is integration—central to the state rather than civil society. Schools in particular have been conceived as the main agents of these state aims by means of a national system of primary schooling, which enables brilliant lower-class pupils to pursue secondary schooling. At the turn of the nineteenth century, as in other European countries, this became the main road for social mobility. It was also a powerful means for the state to achieve the cultural unification

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and the social integration of regional and social groups. The teaching of French was a very powerful tool to accomplish this end.

At the same time, a national curriculum also served to promote access to the "common heritage of humanity." Today, the teaching of philosophy still is a central aspect of the French secondary school curriculum, but even in the primary school the teaching of history is conceived both as inculcating patriotism and at the same time introducing pupils to the idea of French democracy—presented by the French Revolution as the birthplace of human freedom and justice.

Another aim of the primary school curriculum in the national Republican model was to diffuse a scientific and a secular moral vision of society. The teaching of science, of geography, and of arithmetic was explicitly designed to disqualify local knowledge and experience, and to affirm the primacy of intellectual knowledge. The teaching of morals and civics, which replaced religious education in schools, was important and contributed strongly to the creation of a public sphere dominated by the state where the school had the central place. I think the French system has gone farthest in the idea that it is not the school that adapts to the child, but the child that adapts to the school. The child outside the school can be an individual, can belong to a specific family, a specific religion, or a specific culture or group. But at school, he or she is a pupil and no difference should be made on that account.

What is happening to the Republican model today? It has been functioning for more than a century, and it has benefitted from political consensus by the Right and the Left—if we exempt the short period of the Vichy regime. This system came under attack—this is characteristic of most Western countries—at the moment of economic and educational expansion, the sixties. So political criticism started in the sixties with the students in the streets, who were protesting against the Republican model as destroying regional languages and cultures. It was also helped by the work of sociologists, who started to criticize the school as an instrument of reproduction of inequalities. This was the period when the elite secondary system became a mass educational system as well.

In the last ten years the system has been attacked even more than before, because the criticisms of the sixties and seventies still retained the idea that the model was strong on national and social integration. During the last ten years the idea that the system is not even achieving social and national integration has increasingly surfaced.

How then is this system working for immigrants? What are the new challenges? We frequently have debated the idea that the national Republican model managed to integrate populations that were European or had been integrated into European culture by colonization, and that the

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current immigrant population is much more diverse and from different countries. However, the proportion of the immigrant population has not increased significantly because, as historians and sociologists have shown, France has always been an immigrant country that refused to acknowledge that it was.

Another central aspect of the debate—and this all tends to relativize the idea that it is only the Republican model that furthered integration—maintains that the model worked well in an expanding economy and that economic recession and growing unemployment are destroying the basis of the system, especially for immigrants. The form of integration promoted by the Republican model was said to work because immigrants were immediately integrated into the economy, even socially and politically, through participation in workers' unions and social movements, even though they held lower-status jobs.

Another important transformation concerns segregation in housing. For a long time the Republican model of integration as it worked through institutions implied that there was a dispersal of foreigners, so that France had no ghettos as such. But now market principles are at work and the middle classes have left social housing. In the urban periphery there is a lot of social stigmatization and a political discourse by the ultra-nationalist movement against immigrants. All these are threats to the Republican model.

How then is the model working in the schools? It is a complex picture. One can defend the point of view that the model is still working, as well as that it is no longer does. In fact, it is working on some levels and not working on others. If we look at today's curricula, we note little change. In fact, the curricula of primary and secondary schools have remained centered on French and European culture. They avoid any kind of religious teaching, including any kind of formal knowledge about the main religions in the world. There are few local variations, because there is a national curriculum, both for primary and secondary schools. There is a general consensus among politicians and intellectuals—from the Left and the Right—and from teachers, that it should remain as is, because adapting the curriculum would create more inequalities. Still, more and more people are aware that problems stem also from failing to adapt this curriculum to different types of populations that are now in secondary schools.

When we ask teachers about how they work in a classroom they tell us that the principle of "indifference to group difference" is still very important, and that they refuse to make explicit references to cultural differences between pupils. In some sense this has a beneficial effect. If we compare, for instance, success and failure at school, immigrant populations are faring worse than French ones. If we compare French pupils and immigrant pupils from the same social group—such as working-class French

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pupils and working-class immigrant pupils—recent studies have shown that immigrant pupils are doing better. When we compare the French situation to other nearby countries, for instance England, immigrant pupils seem to fare a bit better in the French system.

Research also shows, and this is open to interpretation, that the schools still manage to assimilate pupils. Second- and third-generation immigrant pupils have very similar cultural habits, political opinions, and practices as French ones. Other indicators of assimilation are the absence of ethnic cliques or gangs, even in residential areas and school settings where there is ethnic segregation. Recent studies of friendship among children show that these friendships are not developed on an ethnic or national basis but are characterized by a relatively high amount of inter-group interaction. In that sense one could say that the Republican model is still working, whether seen as a good or a bad thing.

There are some other factors showing that the model is not working too well and might need to adapt to the present situation. For instance, on equality. Although immigrant children seem to be doing a bit better than French ones, most of them belong to the working class, which means that there is still a lot of inequality in the level of schooling. Efforts have been made to respond to these problems since 1980 with the development, for instance, of "Educational Priority Areas" very similar to the British Educational Priority Areas, which were not explicitly designed to deal with the problem of immigrants. That's still a taboo question. But they did address those problems because they occurred in areas where a majority of pupils came from immigrant groups. Now, there are enormous debates concerning the extent to which the system should adapt to different populations, including immigrants, or should remain the same.

Another important dimension that has received a lot of international attention concerns the transmission of values in the schools. This refers to yesterday's debates about the introduction of relativism into the school curriculum. France has not been different from the United States or Britain in the way we teach the French Revolution when, for instance, in the secondary schools, offering five or six different interpretations about the meaning of the French Revolution. This is true for many other subjects as well. But this relativism encounters different school populations that were not previously in the elite school system and now are part of the mass secondary schooling.

These facts have put into question the values the schools should teach. One difficulty is in defining the civic values. For instance, the *hijeb,* or headscarves, create conflict in French schools. Some years ago, we had an enormous debate about it. In the traditional French Republican model, Muslim girls who insist on wearing scarves should be excluded from

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school because, in the French school, religious neutrality is the rule. But what about other interpretations, such as the secular neutrality of French schools? Some intellectuals say these girls should be kept at school because only progressive assimilation within schools can liberate them from political and family pressures. In another more radical new interpretation of the Republican model, such cases were brought to court for the first time. I know in America you let the courts decide educational matters. In France this is new and shows that the system has changed. The courts gave a very liberal interpretation. They argued that "if these girls are not creating any problems in school they should be left in school and not be disturbed." This created yet more debates that have not been resolved, which would indicate that the system perhaps is not working as well as believed.

Another perhaps much more worrying concern is the fact that there has been an increase in school segregation, due to urban segregation. Because the system has become more liberal, and because some market principles have been introduced into the state system, parents partly can choose schools and schools have more autonomy about what to do in their areas. There has also been an increase in school violence. This is a recent phenomenon, although not on the same level of violence as in American schools. But it's a growing phenomenon. Moreover, pupils are denouncing the existence of discrimination and racism in schools. In that sense, the model is not working very well either.

To conclude, I think that it's very difficult to characterize the French position. Some say we have to restore the Republican model as it was before, others say we have to revise it to take into account changes in the social, political, and educational spheres. I don't want to present the French model as the model for you, but to argue that each model has its strengths and its limits and deserves to be studied as such. But the French model all along has been very high in social and national integration. It has not solved the problem of the dilemma of excellence and equality in education. However, because it's high in social integration, it so far has prevented the development of real social exclusion, except in marginal cases. It's problematic, also, in the way it treats difference and diversity. But that is another debate.

Peter Wood: Thank you.

David Pryce-Jones: In the days of its ruling presence over much of the globe, Britain remained something of a racial stronghold. Those who came to Britain from the empire tended to be returning to the home country; a few were princes and maharajahs enjoying privileges; and some thousands filled certain jobs, for instance as seamen and workers in ports. The mosque in Woking, not far from London, is the only one in Britain which has

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celebrated its centenary. In the early 1950s, the Muslim population of Britain was twenty-three thousand. It was virtually nil elsewhere in Europe with the exception of France, through its incorporation of Algeria as a supposedly metropolitan province, and its use of Maghrebi Arab troops and labor battalions in the First War. Black immigrants were fewer still.

The relationship between the end of empire and mass immigration into formerly imperial countries is a subject which has not yet been explored. These are movements of population which challenge stereotypes and taboos. Hitherto colonized people sought entry first and foremost into the colonizer countries—people from the Indian sub-continent to Britain, Maghrebi Arabs to France, Libyans to Italy, Indonesians to Holland, and so on. On the one hand, the independence newly won by nationalist leaders and movements evidently was not enough to retain their people, and on the other hand, quite as evidently, they were choosing to live in the very imperial countries which their nationalist leaders had been trying to persuade them to resent as exploitative and racist.

First to arrive in Britain, in 1948, was a boatload of five hundred immigrants from Jamaica, to a chorus, in the press at least, of surprise and good will. At the time Britain was as stable a country as any; its identity had remained unquestioned for over two centuries and perhaps longer. The rising flow of immigrants soon altered the initial reaction, raising the prospect of racial conflict, something of which there had been neither previous experience nor expectation. In one of the most influential speeches made in postwar Britain, Enoch Powell, already a cabinet minister, issued a warning about just such an outcome. What he said was, "Et Tiberim multo spumanitem sanguine cerno," which translated into folklore as a prophecy of rivers running with blood. Here was the last British politician, it is safe to say, to wreck his career by quoting Virgil. Nobody was willing to reflect on what exactly the link might be between warning, prevention, and cure.

In the sixties and seventies, policy was pursued by all political parties to limit immigration while at the same time ensuring that whatever possible was done to promote rights and equal opportunities for those who had already overcome immigration barriers—or managed to slip under them. A proliferation of agencies, some of them official like the Race Relations Board and others quangos, self-appointed from among the great and good, worked to make British citizens of them. In true liberal style, neither the natives nor the immigrants were asked for their opinion about that. Race riots did occur; the worst was in 1981, in Brixton, an inner London suburb with a large Jamaican population. But legislation and long-perfected hypocrisy have fudged the sort of slide into safety which has served the British so well in many a narrow pass.

According to the latest census of 1991, 5.5 percent of the population are immigrants from the West Indies—Afro-Caribbean in the term typical

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of the evolving socio-bureaucratese—as well as from India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Other ethnically distinct groups bring the total up to perhaps 6.5 percent. Over one million are Muslim. For Afro-Caribbeans, integration is primarily an issue of color or race; for Muslims it tends to transform into one of culture and religion.

Islam has traditionally taught that a Muslim in a country of unbelief, or *kufr,* was unable to fulfill the obligations of faith, and therefore had to choose between conquering that country or leaving it. Is Britain, is the rest of Europe, then host for the first time in history to minorities with a deliberate separatist aim, and one justified by religious faith and therefore beyond compromise? Is this reverse colonialism, and if not, what is the role of Islam in integration? Does "Muslim" remain a primary and self-contained definition of identity, or can it be coupled with a national adjective, as in British Muslim, French Muslim, and so on?

Complicating the issue still further are diversities which immigrants have carried with them to the West, national disputes from the Indian subcontinent, Sunni or Shia sectarianism, factionalism, and clan and community loyalties. Much historical luggage has been ferried into a new setting, from the old days of empire and from long before that as well.

The majority of British Muslims are adherents of Jama'at at-Tabligh, a movement founded in India in the 1920s by Muhammad Ilyas as latter-day Sufism, expressly non-political and pietistic, a submission of the individual to God. To take a sample of what immigration looks like in practice, the city of Leicester in the 1991 census had a population of 270,493, of whom 14 percent were Hindu, 4.3 percent Muslim, and 3.8 percent Sikh. The Leicester Muslims were mostly Gujurati-speaking Deobandis, who are Jama'at at-Tabligh associates. Just this one city has over fifty separate Muslim organizations. In Britain as a whole, there are over one thousand separate Muslim organizations. In France, with almost five million Muslims, there are over three thousand such organizations.

Transplanted from countries of origin these organizations aim to defend a particular identity, which may be religious, cultural, or ethnic. Power and patronage are at stake locally and far beyond the border too. The physical landscape at once changes as a result. Lately, the Muslims of Britain announced their intention to build over a hundred new mosques, in addition to the many hundreds already existing. Languages like Bengali, Urdu, Hindi, Gujurati, are heard in the street and on special television and radio programs. Clothing, food, and social habits visibly set apart many immigrants, Muslims and others of course.

Immigrants did not cause the identity crisis which came to afflict post-war Britain, though they have had a bystander part to play, and they were certainly beneficiaries of it. For reasons which historians will one day have

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to sift, the life's blood of the major institutions of the nation has slowly been draining away, first the empire, then the monarchy, the acts of union which brought Scotland, Wales, and England into a single polity, the supremacy of Parliament, the separation of powers, the churches as they jettison moral standards, and the universities as they jettison intellectual standards, and—not least—marriage, once the society's building block and now one somewhat neglected life choice among others.

National schools are a microcosm of the current identity crisis. The educational system has been the battleground of competing value systems. There are no clear or even generally accepted notions of what to teach, or to what ends. The predetermined and conflicting political purposes of successive governments and their advisors have treated pupils as laboratory material for suitable experiment rather than as young people in need of skills to deal with the adult world. Some years ago the philosopher Alasdair Macintyre found that Britain stood on the brink of moral illiteracy, so that a concept such as "good" or "just" had no practical application. The educational process completed the moral chaos of upbringing at home, relativizing the concepts of good and just, right and wrong, to the point of meaninglessness.

A quango called the Basic Skills Agency lately produced a survey involving eight thousand people who spoke fluent English. About a quarter were functionally illiterate or innumerate. The Plain English Campaign, a lobby group, states flatly, "The average reading age in this country is reckoned to be about nine." In various statistics comparing performance in education and skills between industrialized countries, Britain is near the bottom. An official with the title of Chief Inspector of Schools has just described how "the trivialisation of culture and the erosion of belief in the intellect" have become orthodoxies in schools, encouraging what he calls the "child-centred mess" of today, with pupils reported as making little or no progress. In the language of Ivan Illych, there has been "deschooling." Crime statistics, the spread of the so-called underclass, welfare dependency, and poverty of aspiration speak for themselves.

Multiculturalism means differing things to differing people. Some argue that multiculturalism has been a major factor in the integration of minorities. The counter-argument is that multiculturalism is filling the vacuum created by loss of identity in the nation, and it is retrograde because it justifies keeping minorities within boundaries of their own which place them at a disadvantage when it comes to the realities of competition. Here is a repeat in the modern mode of the famous debate of the 1830s about the nature of education to be provided for Indians. Macaulay's great memorandum stated that it was impossible to condone teaching what was inadequate, when "by universal confession" better practice was available, and known to be so. The officials at India House

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concurred, all in their own prose: "The great end should not have been to teach Hindu learning or Mohammedan teaching, but useful learning."

The virtues of multiculturalism slide imperceptibly into its vices. The requisite tolerance is an aspect of the failure of Macaulay's "universal confession." Equality here means the maintenance of a number of lowest common denominators. There are now Afro-Caribbean families who prefer to return to the West Indies to make sure that their children will learn to read and write functionally. Among other negative consequences is political correctness, for instance the embarrassment expressed by a headmaster at singing the national anthem, or refusal to mention in the classroom the Battle of Britain, because, as one teacher put it, "I'm not sure Pakistanis and people of West Indian origin would feel involved." (Almost certain not to be the case, in peoples rightly proud of a warrior past.)

Here is a letter recently published in a national newspaper: "My 11-year-old son has been ordered by his teacher at Beverley Grammar School, East Yorkshire, to write out 'I must not make racist remarks' on two sides of a piece of paper. He was also threatened with suspension by the deputy head. His 'racist crime' was to say 'G'day sport' to an Australian classmate, who happens to be a friend." Recently Dr. Nicholas Tate, chief executive of yet another quango, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, provoked headlines when he said that children in schools should be taught what it means to be British; they should be familiar with Christianity, British history, and English literature. A father writes in the press that his three-year-old child has been taught about prayer in a mosque, synagogue, and gundwara, and asked to draw these places too.

Multiculturalism helps to foster separatism. If people are encouraged to suppose that their religions and culture are equal and undifferentiated in all respects, some of them will refuse to make the concessions necessary in democratic societies, insisting instead that their particularity is an absolute. Black Power flared momentarily in the person and career of Michael de Freitas, otherwise Michael X, who modeled himself closely on the American Malcolm X. But he was executed in his home country of Trinidad for murder, and the movement was then revealed to have no base in society.

Black Power may be a spent force, but Islamic fundamentalism remains a thriving offspring of multiculturalism, fashioning a separatist identity beyond questioning, akin to manifest destiny. The anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss observed in *Tristes Tropiques,* "The truth is that contact with non-Muslims distresses Muslims. Their provincial way of life survives, but under constant threat from other life-styles freer and more flexible than their own, and which may affect it through the mere fact of propinquity." Muslims, he went on, are "incapable of tolerating the existence of others as others."

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Is this so? Are Islamic fundamentalists persuading others to join with them in an exclusive value system? Certainly the revolution in 1979 which brought to power the regime of the ayatollahs in Iran was a significant challenge to the values pertaining to pluralist societies such as Western democracies. People in Iran were to be condemned to penalties, including death, when their "fault" amounted to not belonging to the ruling Shia majority.

The *fatwa* pronounced against Salman Rushdie for publishing his novel *The Satanic Verses* provided the Islamic fundamentalist challenge with a focus, an issue. The Iranian leadership had granted itself authority to condemn to death a citizen of another country, and one who had broken no law that he was supposed to obey. If ever there was an act of reverse colonialism, this was it. The explanation of the *fatwa* lies at least partly in a wish to be avenged for perceived slights and humiliations in the past, but coupled with that was the prospect of maximizing the reach of Islamic fundamentalism by mobilizing the British Muslims—in the simplest terms, testing out whether Islam could provide for Tehran the basis of a productive foreign policy.

Demonstrations of one or two thousand—but not more—British Muslims followed, and copies of the book were burned for the benefit of press photographers. In similar pursuit of reverse colonialism, an Iranian, Dr. Kalim Saddiqi, appointed members of what was intended to be a separate Muslim parliament in Britain, with the aim of disregarding British law and legislating instead to put in place the *sharia,* or Islamic law. Paid for by Tehran, Saddiqi was evidently the agent of a foreign power. His brand of separatism survived his unexpected death.

The Runnymede Trust is one among other pressure groups seeking to define racism as an exclusively British characteristic. One of this trust's reports in 1997 tried to popularize a new coinage, "Islamophobia." There is no such thing. Some psychological guilt is in play, a mysterious self-accusation akin to the type of fellow-traveling between the wars which inverted reality, defining Soviet communism as progressive and democracy as decadent. British people now know almost nothing about their own religion, let alone anyone else's, and they care even less. Islam as such arouses no response, for or against.

But the unelected and separatist Muslim parliament was quick to capitalize on this new coinage, hosting a conference to accuse the British of ancient hate and prejudice. According to these separatists, an eternal struggle does indeed exist between truth, that is Islam, and falsehood, that is the West, and this clash of civilizations can be resolved only when the West submits to Islam. Islamophobia to them is bad, Britanophobia only natural. They do not grant the tolerance that they demand.

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Faced with intransigence, the democratic instinct is usually to appease. Separate Muslim education has been allowed in principle, and the first two exclusively Muslim schools are now open.

Iran, and Arab countries including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Libya, continue to sponsor groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, Hizb ut-Tahrir and the Al-Kifah Society, who all advocate Muslim separatism in Western countries. Banned in the Middle East, Hizb ut-Tahrir claims the right of free speech in Britain in order to dedicate itself to a unified Islamic state in Europe and beyond. Its meetings provoke violence. Its publications are uncompromisingly imperialist, repeating the message—and this is a quotation from a recent editorial: "All over the world the twin evils of freedom and democracy have wreaked havoc with people's lives." Westerners who fail to mend their ways voluntarily will be forcibly converted.

It is hard to decide whether separatism of this sort has been contained so far more by luck or by common sense. No British Muslim is known to have made any attempt to obtain the immense reward offered for the killing of Rushdie. There were no disturbances in schools, even in those where Muslim pupils predominated. The Jama'at at-Tabligh emphasis on spirituality encouraged the Rushdie affair to fizzle out inconsequentially, exposing the extremism of the separatist groups.

The rising generation of immigrants is losing familiarity with the country of origin, its language, and even its customs. "I had an arranged marriage," a young woman writes in *Trends,* which decribes itself as "Britain's Biggest Selling Muslim Magazine." Her specific case expresses for many the sorts of strains inherent in an integration which is already irreversible. Her husband will not let her study for a career. "I have tried to discuss this with him but he has a hundred and one excuses ready. He makes me cry but still he won't change his mind. I am very unhappy and feel that I have sacrificed so much and given up my youth."

Recent Research on the Achievements of Ethnic Minority Pupils is the title of a publication in late 1996 by the Office for Standards in Education, another of the myriad quangos which the topic of education attracts. This report represents the line of the contemporary educational and academic establishment in all its sincerity and confusion. Acknowledging that there is "little indication of overt racism in relations among pupils," the report goes on to insist that all racial groups must perform equally. Should this not be the case, then racism is to blame, not culture, and above all not the individual himself.

White pupils in fact sometimes perform worst of all, yet the report leaves the clear impression that the whole process of education puts Asian and black students at a disadvantage. One telling figure: Afro-Caribbean boys and girls alike are apparently between three and six times more likely to be excluded from primary and secondary school—which today is the

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sole serious punishment available to the authorities—than whites of the same sex. Something cultural is in play, seemingly, which it is hardly plausible to ascribe to society in general or teachers in particular. Wrapping themselves up in multiculturalism, the authors of this report in practice deny the specificity of each actual culture. The report stresses that figures for performance are tentative, but seemingly Muslim pupils are steadily increasing their exam scores and are sometimes over-represented in polytechnics and under-represented in universities.

Integration is by its nature beyond measurement. As good a witness to it as any is Henry Louis Gates, Jr., the distinguished American intellectual. In the *New Yorker* in May 1997, he described amusingly how twenty-five years ago in London, he couldn't understand a word anyone was saying. Then he saw a black face, a "brother," who spoke only to sound like all the other British. He had assumed, he goes on, that his black compatriots sounded black because they were black, that "the shape of our African lips had something to do with our characteristic consonants and vowels." Dumbstruck by this at the time, he was even more dumbstruck to discover in the London of today "the social ease between most blacks and whites." There were Afro-Caribbean artists, publications, shop owners, even peers of the realm. Socio-bureaucratese can extend to Anglo-Afro-Caribbean. The same goes for other minorities among whom are also peers and members of Parliament, local councillors, industrialists and entrepreneurs, and artists and sporting personalities. The thousand Muslim organizations have proved bridgeheads into the society at large. Lévi-Strauss jumped too soon to the conclusion that context is unable to affect conditioning, and the fundamentalists are trying to enforce the same conclusion too late. The allure of democracy and capitalism is overcoming what might have been a defensive separatism.

In its apparent death throes, however, separatism has received a reprieve from quite an unexpected direction. Immigrants arrived in sizable numbers at a moment when French and German politicians were beginning a drive to build common institutions under the heading of Europe. The ideological impetus for this derived in the main from the belief that war is the outcome of nationalism, and the nation-state must therefore be destroyed if there is to be peace. Popular support has always been and remains doubtful, but the politicians of one European country after another have persuaded themselves that a historic undertaking is at hand. Some type of supra-national entity is visibly in the offing.

Each individual nation-state will supposedly become a region, duly represented in common institutions at the center, which happens to be in Brussels. Peoples are defined for this purpose as those with a territory of their own, even although they may for centuries have been incorporated

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with other peoples into a nation-state, like the Welsh and Scots, the Basques, Flemings, Burgundians, Bavarians, and so on.

The nation-state as such has come under so severe an attack that its achievements tend to pass unrecognized: it has been the one structure reliably expressing while also restraining national identity, through the drafting of constitutions, the rule of law, enfranchisement, and civil rights. Every guarantee for minority and civic rights exists in the emerging Europe, but on paper only, and without regard to events unfolding. The present refashioning of nation-states into peoples each with their territorial basis leaves high and dry anyone and everyone who has no claim to territory, and that is the immigrants.

Fired as power devolves to them, territorially-based peoples mobilize, and some of them further resort to terror, like the Corsicans, Basques, the IRA, Flemings, and the northern Italians whom the Lombard League claims to represent. Under the challenge to what has been settled identity, the majority population of the nation-state correspondingly experiences a nationalist backlash.

In Britain, the National Front, the local fascist movement, in all its electoral campaigns has won just one single seat on a local council. Continental Europe has a very different historic legacy, and there, in response to politically enforced union-cum-regionalism, fascist movements are growing fast. These parties are similar to their pre-war forbears, and the most successful of them—in France, in Austria, in Belgium—obtain 20 and even 30 percent of the votes in regional and national elections. As the old nation-state loses its power to enforce compromise and to protect all its citizens, immigrant minorities find themselves with nowhere to turn except their original identity, tribalism, Islamic fundamentalism, separatism of whatever sort. The politicians of this new Europe are creating scapegoats and outcasts. Immigrants who believed themselves to be integrated are attacked and vilified, often killed, on account of their race or religion. A utopian project, then, is reproducing ills that it aspired to eliminate. We have been here before. Thank you.

Peter Wood: Now, to Michael Meyers.

Michael Meyers: First, I want to thank and congratulate Dr. Kurzweil and *Partisan Review*, as well as the Austrian Cultural Institute, and Boston University, for sponsoring this urgent conference. We've had a couple of days for reappraisal and renewal. And it has been an all-important undertaking because the survival of a free, democratic society depends on an informed, literate, and involved population that has more in common with each other than our diversity. The American people, in the pursuit of more

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knowledge and deeper understanding of the human experience and destiny, have to be more than the sum of their ethnic, religious, and cultural parts. In our modern world, everyone will need a lot more education just to survive, to get along with others, or to argue with them intelligently. Civility and civilization will depend upon the ability to reason, to interact with each other.

This was the promise of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Brown vs. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas, et al.* decision of 1954. You remember that ruling—and the finding—for the state to separate the Negro child from others of similar age and qualifications solely on the basis of race instills in the Negro children a "feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." The Court unanimously struck down racially separate public schools as "inherently unequal," thereby overruling its "separate but equal" ruling of 1896 which had upheld racially-segregated railroad transportation facilities in Louisiana.

Never mind that the *Brown* ruling that reversed (in the field of public education, at least) *Plessy vs. Ferguson*'s "separate but equal" doctrine also revived in the Congress, and in several state legislatures, the notion of "interposition and nullification," or that it stirred racial passions—so much so that there was massive resistance to the desegregation mandate. And, put aside the criticism of the Court, from legal scholars and others, for applying social science data to drive a legal opinion, that the judges used psychology as support for a new legal doctrine to vindicate the constitutional rights of the Negro children. And never mind that the U.S. Supreme Court only acknowledged in footnote 11 that social science had persuaded it that state-imposed segregation harms Negro children, but ignored the same social science evidence that such segregation also harmed *majority* group children's personality development—creating in whites moral confusion and conflicts, racial arrogance, and feelings of superiority—it was a decision that sparked the 1950s Civil Rights movement.

Those who had struggled for so long to convince the courts, executive branch, and Congress to declare enforced segregation as bad law and bad public policy carried the Supreme Court's decision to the streets, and suites; to the depots, public accomodations, and to the campuses. There was fervor and ferment in the air which ushered in a period of confrontation and optimism, and a feeling that Negroes could *really* be "free by '63." By 1968, Martin Luther King, Jr.—after having faced down dogs, and race-baiters, and the vanguard of the resistance to desegregation—after having endured the doubletalk and doubletakes of the well-intentioned who had argued for gradualism, Dr. King said he had seen the promised land. He could taste victory over the tenacity and virulence of race as a divide between human beings.

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Dr. Kurzweil's assignment to me—to lay out "What Can We Do Concretely to Achieve Equality?"—brings forth all this recent history, tumult, and resolve toward equality, and Dr. King's question: "WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?" Will it be community or will it be chaos?

To chart the future, we must know where we have been. As Jerry Martin yesterday put the question: does the past matter anymore? This is the question African-Americans are asking about the demise of affirmative action as a governmental inducement to equal access. One black woman the other day said to me, "Okay, let's acknowledge that affirmative action has, in some instances, been flawed. But, how can Americans posture so, and assume that nothing at all is owed to blacks as a group?"

If the past matters, it cannot be said with truth that affirmative action is "the same" as invidious discrimination. That would be like saying an inclusionary strategy to ensure a racially diverse campus population, to make a once all-male campus co-ed, is the same as the exclusionary policies and quotas that once denied equal access on the grounds of race and sex.

We easily understand the concept of accountability when individuals act unlawfully. When governmental power has, over a long period of time, contributed to pervasive, intensive discrimination against a group, it often is necessary—strategic, and, yes, moral, to place the power of government on the side of those seeking remedies to that discrimination. Dr. King analogized this to how the Untouchables in India received admissions preferences in their universities.

In the framework of the American system, passage of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments alone did not, *and could not*, deliver equal rights, much less *civil rights* to the black underclass. Hence, those in and outside of government who controlled decisions about qualifications devised the very methodologies for *affirmatively including* the once excluded. Those decision-makers included the guardians of the academy—who managed the academy both as a community of learners and teachers, and as a workplace. They themselves devised the particular means for evaluating, admitting, and educating minority students. And, in several instances, they, who presumably got their own jobs through merit, messed up. As they say, "Mistakes were made."

At one university, a black political scientist got tenure who had never published a single book, and then the college appointed him as chairman of the black studies department. Other colleges marginalized blacks' education by creating such questionable departments. On such campuses, supposed academic disciplines were colorized, such that the academy sanctioned "Black Psychology," "Black English," and "Black Studies." In effect, the academy gave aid, comfort, and authenticity to dilettantish voices who argued that there is such a thing as "White Psychology," "White English," and "White

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Studies." At one mid-west college, students were offered "Black Karate"—not black-belt karate, but "Black Karate." Antioch College, then a single campus in Yellow Springs, Ohio, turned over the direction of its "Afro-American Studies Institute" to a black undergraduate.

What, therefore, did the guardians of the academy expect students to think of them?

In due course, some colleges allowed to be set up "black dorms." They also hired freshly minted deans and counselors and vice presidents (in window-dressing fashion) *for* minority students. You've all seen the ads in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*—for Dean or Vice President of Minority Student Affairs, etc. In short, they set up parallel divisions, and services, and racial ghettoes on the campuses. They set up ghetto programs and placed blacks in ghetto jobs. And they encouraged inner-city blacks to set up segregated housing projects on the greens of elite and other mainstream institutions of higher education. Some turned over to black student groups lists of incoming blacks for separate orientation and proselytizing. Others ceded to racial affinity groups the welcoming wagon for minority students. Some institutions placed black students into the admissions processes, as readers of applications from black candidates, to determine authentic blackness.

In legal parlance, the guardians of the academy deliberately established dual, separate, and unequal societies on campus, which was, and is, counter to the purposes of the Civil Rights movement and to civil rights laws. In a contest between observance of the rule of law and paternalism, *paternalism almost always won.*

The academicians had help from the civil rights organizations which had, by and large, abandoned the black students who boldly desegregated once lily-white campuses. The civil rights establishment, moreover, itself adopted or adapted to the racial identity fad. Groups that once advocated integration rationalized and approved of black separatism on campus. Consider, for example, this statement from a policy paper on the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies:

> Black houses, centers and dormitories. . .help to reinforce cultural identity, offer relief from the tensions of living in an environment where blacks are reminded constantly of their "different" status, and provide mutual support in dealing with common experiences. At their best, such group settings provide an atmosphere of solidarity and encouragement, and thus may contribute to the more successful performance of black students. . .They serve as important adjuncts to other support services offered by the university.

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Rounding out their affection for and devotion to "separate but equal," the race scholars and erstwhile civil rights advocates talk up the value of segregation. They blame the desegregation movement for jeopardizing "fine" black schools. In effect, and purpose, civil rights groups and black identity advocates have cut and run away from integration. One black pundit/activist, Robert L. Woodson, Sr., proudly points out that he broke with the Civil Rights movement over "forced busing," adding that black children "don't need to sit next to whites to get a quality education."

Some of us in the Civil Rights movement still dare to think that black public colleges are mere relics of a discredited past. They need to be phased out, merged with other state institutions, or discontinued altogether as racially-identifiable institutions. Some of us think the purpose of bringing blacks into the mainstream institutions of higher education, to the best and better colleges, was *precisely* to give black students the opportunity to immerse, to integrate, to—quoting Roy Wilkins—"learn what the white boys learn," and, yes, also to assist with the thorough education of white and other college students about diversity and commonality—through interaction, socialization, and education in a common core, expanded curriculum.

Who would have thought that blacks themselves would demand a return to "separate but equal"? One black Ph.D. told me, "I want segregation again, only without the lynching." From her American base, one black student says that she's *tired* of living in a world full of white people; "I want to know how it feels to live in a world full of people who look like me."

At Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, when I visited with student residents of Ujamaa, their black dorm—to urge them to abandon their retreat from integration—one black student leader shot back, "I didn't come to Cornell to be white." And, it seems, not to be a scholar, either. So, on—of all places—college campuses, there is a confusion as to culture and race. Students don't know that there is no such thing as "race," that it's a mere social invention, and they don't know the basics about culture. In any inner-city neighborhood, there are many cultures represented. Blacks, like whites, have various religions, languages, and nationalities.

But, the driving philosophy behind some Afrocentrics, masquerading as multiculturalists or pluralists, is that all blacks share a common culture, a common heritage, a common (if not identical) "black" experience. To the naked eye, it seems they are depicting blacks as look-alikes, who talk, pray, think, love, and "be" black—who walk in lockstep. When will students learn—when will they be taught—as Dr. Kenneth B. Clark often told me—that cultures are not like water and oil; *cultures mix*.

Shockingly, as we approach the new millenium, many still cling to the old-fashioned thinking that race-mixing, that cultural interchange, is unsettling, unnatural, and unnecessary.

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I, therefore, offer some bold prescriptions, and some modest predictions. In so doing, I address the presidents, trustees, and faculties of our colleges and universities:

You must "decide" what a university is, and whether it will have rigorous standards for all—for all students, staff, and faculty.

You must decide whether yours will be a "world-class university" or an "ABC" university. A world-class university supports critical thinking, encourages students to broaden their horizons, interact as learners and scholars, and test their ideas. The idea is to have students stretch their minds, not the truth. Those with either Afrocentric or Eurocentric approaches to knowledge, who stretch the truth in pursuit of self-esteem, have always been, and will always be, idiots.

An "ABC" university is one that puts an "A" before Ph.D.—for Asians; a "B" before Ph.D.—for Blacks; and a "C" before Ph.D.—for Caucasians. An "ABC" university boasts of Asian, Black, and Caucasian Ph.D.s on the faculty, instead of taking pride in having a faculty of scholars and colleagues who are demonstrating to the students how to get along, how to work cooperatively and collegially, across race and gender lines.

It is time to challenge and dismantle the dual system of higher education. This means all racial rhetoric causes should be abandoned, as affronts to rigorous thinking and the open pursuit of knowledge. Accordingly, all racially identifiable centers, dorms, facilities, and colleges must be discontinued or promptly desegregated. No institution should permit racial groups to pick who lives in a dormitory or wing of a dorm on the basis of race any more than a student should pick who can and cannot sit next to him in a classroom. A request for a roommate may be reasonably granted, but that's it. Moreover, separate pre-orientation programs for minority students will need to be stopped. The resources of the college/university should not support racially exclusionary groupings or any other distinctly racial functions, such as a separate prom, or a black, Asian, Hispanic, or white student's union.

On the twenty-first-century campus, there will only be "counselors," "deans," and race-neutral titles for all staff—without regard to the race or ethnicity of the students they serve.

Admissions processes will need to be recast. If criteria other than grade point average, or SAT and Achievement Test scores are to be considered for any student, such expansive criteria shall be considered for all applicants, so as not to divide and stigmatize some students or to institutionalize double standards based on either race or class.

No student is to be spoken to or spoken of in terms of their race/skin color. Students who are capable are not so "because" they are Caucasian or Asian; those who are under-achievers are not so "because" they belong to a particular racial classification. As Ward Connerly says, we've got to stop talking

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to each other as if race is the most important or only thing that distinguishes us.

We need to encourage trustee boards to butt into campus quality-of-life issues. Trustees can and should evaluate the university president on the basis of his/her institution's success with fostering and achieving racial integration, and with actually eliminating racially isolated facilities.

We need to work to replicate on more campuses groups like Jerry Martin's National Alumni Forum. In this connection, we need to seek foundation grants to resource and support campus-based groups who organize alumni on behalf of the great books, a core curriculum, and in opposition to racialism and ethnocentrism. We must spot and correct such "isms" as racism, sexism, and paternalism as antithetical to free inquiry, and to the purposes of the academy.

We need to bring to the campus a new Civil Rights movement—and identify and support activists who take personal and meaningful steps on campus to foster racial interaction—and when they leave campus, in making integrated housing choices. As Kurt Scholz said yesterday, "College presidents and college leaders should encourage their students to practice the art of peaceably living together."

We need a MacArthur-type foundation to identify and financially support those geniuses on and off campus who are working diligently and courageously to tear down the racial walls in society—those who, when they make choices in their living arrangements, move into areas where their racial group is underrepresented.

We need a central clearinghouse operation, equipped with modern-age technology, to monitor either segregative or integrative activities and efforts on the campuses where we have leaders "reporting in."

All college bulletins/catalogues and student handbooks will need to be revised so as not to stereotype, stigmatize, categorize, or focus on the racial identity of student groups, or reference racial support or counseling services.

Hiring should be diverse, not ghettoized. Window-dressing and token-quota hiring should be ruled out in policy statements *and* practice; and all employment patterns should be assessed in accordance with validated job descriptions, extensive outreach, and core qualifications. The Joint Center finally got it right, in advising, "What is needed is for blacks to be convinced that they are being invited to the faculty because of their scholarship. . .and not in the first instance to teach African or African-American studies." Also, minority faculty—"particularly those on tenure track—should not be presumed to take on special loads simply because they are black. . . ."

We need a renewed emphasis on integration in grades K-12. In this connection, we need more advocates for integration—for integration's sake. On the factual side, as Theodore Cross indicates, "Whites predominantly go to the

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well-funded schools that can afford computers. Blacks in massive numbers go to inner-city and rural schools that can barely afford to purchase textbooks. . .Even if a particular [black] school can afford computer facilities, there will be far more students competing for computer time in overcrowded and underfunded inner-city schools than will be the case in suburban institutions. . . .This inevitably means that black students in the ghetto schools will fall behind. . . ."

Integration is the only practical way out of segregation because, as Cross puts it, "The preferred schools (and) colleges. . .are usually those with strong links to the white-controlled world of business, finance, and law. Because of prior segregation and racial subordination, these advantaged places of schooling and living are presently occupied almost exclusively by whites. Unless blacks have equal access in space and time to all the physical playing fields of competition, equal opportunity rules will be of little avail *even to the most* dedicated, hardworking, and gifted black students."

That's why the Cornell black student *really* matriculated at Cornell—not to be "white," but to learn alongside her fellow Americans, of all colors, at an elite institution.

I predict that if we were plain-spoken with students; that if we treated them as *individuals* rather than as representatives of tribes, we would have a head start in creating truly world-class higher education institutions. We should, at least, try. It is the kind of Civil Rights movement for the twenty-first century. With history and the lessons of racial discord behind us, we can and should move forward—into the new millennium. Forward with integration, interaction, and cooperation, not backwards to segregation, separatism, and conflict. We should affirmatively answer Martin Luther King, Jr.'s question, "Where do we go from here—Chaos or Community?" with, "to community, of course." Of course.

Peter Wood: Now we'll hear from Nat Glazer.

Nathan Glazer: Not long ago, in a conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, an international organization of scholars and educators, its president, William Cummings of SUNY-Buffalo, proposed as the title for a session on multiculturalism "Historical Cultures vs. Multi-Cultures." This was to me an interesting and new terminology for thinking about the conflict over culture in the curriculum. Normally we talk about the target of multiculturalism as the "traditional curriculum" or the "canon." "Historical cultures" has a somewhat different resonance and reminds us of just what is at stake in the conflict over multiculturalism, and why it arouses so much anxiety and anger.

The term "multiculturalism" has become an all-purpose epithet to denounce everything we may not like in poststructuralism, deconstruction,

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postmodernism, political correctness, and the like, which makes it difficult to talk about multiculturalism in any precise sense. I will use it here not as an *omnium gatherum* to describe the new and the questionable but in a more limited way to describe the new approaches in education which favor or "privilege" the cultures or supposed cultures of minorities, women, immigrants, and some other groups. Some of these—women, gays and lesbians, or, a somewhat new one, the disabled—only doubtfully have a distinctive culture in the sense in which ethnic groups do. It was the differences in culture deriving from ethnicity in multi-ethnic societies which gave birth to the term "multicultural." The word is relatively new. It first began to be used in Canada, a truly multicultural society, and Australia, which has decided to think of itself as one, twenty years ago. It migrated to the United States shortly thereafter, and has solidly established itself here and in Western Europe in the past ten or fifteen years. In the United States it has replaced "cultural pluralism," an approach to our cultural diversity originally formulated by Horace Kallen during World War I and in the 1920s. It was never in wide use, but it spawned similar terms such as "intercultural education," which could be heard as late as the 1950s. "Cultural pluralism" still seems less alarming than "multiculturalism," though if one limits oneself to the surface meaning of the two terms it is hard to see why.

How are we to refer to the cultural content of the curriculum before multiculturalism, the content that multicultural initiatives criticize and hope to supplement or supplant? Multiculturalism versus what? William Cummings proposed "historical cultures," and I find this is an innovative way of referring to the curriculum of the past that now is pretty much on the defensive.

The first major battle in the multicultural wars to receive widespread media attention erupted at Stanford, ten years ago, where students were required to take a course in Western civilization, "Western Civ," in student jargon. As at so many American colleges and universities, with their commitment to a year or two of general education for undergraduate students before specialization, a course existed that covered some of the classic literature of the Western world. These courses typically begin with Homer and the Bible, and end variously, depending on the college, with Freud or a similar major figure in early twentieth-century thought. It is clear how such courses should begin: it is much less clear how they should end.

A key part of Western civilization, science and technology, was not at issue in the conflict at Stanford, and is still not at issue. The exclusion of science, technology, mathematics, from the impact of the multicultural assault is important. It means that a good part of our Western "historical culture" emerges unscathed, and spreads its influence over the entire world with little dispute, despite the fact that the flowering and development and

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formalization of science, technology, and mathematics occurred in Western Europe, the home of the colonizers and imperialists. While among the writings of the advocates of multiculturalism one can find outlandish assertions about the history of these fields in order to give greater credit to Africa, or the argument that "linear" reasoning goes against the grain of African or women's culture, once one gets to the actual courses on algebra or physics or engineering, all this fades into the background, or never emerges from it. Perhaps there are multicultural versions of such courses, but I am sure that at best all one will find is a *pro forma* expression of piety here and there to give credit to places and people we have not thought of as playing a major role in these fields, and that the substance of the courses, which is indeed universal, is unaffected. A number of other major fields of undergraduate study, business for example, are also very little affected by multiculturalism.

At Stanford, the argument of the student critics was first that it did not cover other great traditions—of which there are really only two with major literature, the Chinese and the Indian; second, that it did not include literature by contemporary non-Western writers of non-white race; and third, that it did not include literature by American minority writers and women. These absences agitated the student protesters and made them feel the course was "hegemonic" or "monolithic"—terms commonly used in the conflicts over multiculturalism.

This was a very mixed bag of criticism. If the issue was that the literature of only one great tradition was covered, the solution was simple. Yes, something of the great Chinese and Indian traditions would be included. This is not uncommonly done even in the absence of multicultural attack. But this was not the major opposition to the course. The opponents were primarily African-American students, and what could they expect to gain by readings from Confucius and the *Bhagavadgita*? Their complaint was rather the absence of writers "of color," and of readings that highlighted, as the popular term put it, "race, class, and gender."

The solution was to allow a variety of new materials to be introduced in required courses that replaced the old Western Civ, with the amount of required classic Western materials sharply reduced. I do not believe much material from the Chinese and Indian great traditions made it into the new courses. I expected that the faculty, which includes many who specialize in these great traditions, would seize the opportunity to include such literature, but the student desire for contemporary texts highlighting race, class, and gender was too strong, and the power of the East Asian and South Asian specialists too modest to affect the changes in the curriculum.

Despite the popularity of the triplet of "race, class, and gender," which the student protesters asserted was excluded from Western Civ, class definitely

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took a back seat to race and gender. If an oppressed or deprived group was not of a different race or ethnic group from the one dominant in the society, or women, there was simply not much interest in it. Class as a subject of study and research has fallen from the eminent position it held in the 1950s and 1960s in sociology, history, anthropology, and other fields.

This early conflict was followed by many others in leading American colleges and universities, and in state public education systems. The most prominent conflicts in the public education systems were in New York State and in California, as I discussed in *We Are All Multiculturalists Now.* The major literature on multiculturalism, indeed the overwhelming part of it, deals with conflicts in colleges and universities.

Conflicts in the colleges and universities are different from those in the state public school systems. In the colleges and universities, conflict centers on one or a few required courses, on new courses designed to instruct students in the problems of "race, class, and gender," and on demands by various student groups that studies of various racial and ethnic groups be included in the curriculum. But college students not interested in these issues can generally ignore them: the conflicts have had no influence on education in science and engineering, little influence on much pre-professional and professional education (education and social work are exceptions), and have found their greatest faculty support in English departments, in some foreign-language departments, and in a few of the social sciences, particularly anthropology. There has not been much influence of multicultural demands on business education, one of the largest undergraduate concentrations, or on economics. Most students can go through college and university only marginally affected by the new required course or courses or by the expanded programs in ethnic studies. They will probably not escape the drumbeat of praise for "diversity," led by college presidents, will probably read some pre-registration materials on diversity, may be lectured on its value and on the need for sensitivity to different others in orientation week, but they need not go to the diversity celebrations, and can manage their college educations pretty much as before.

One can find extensions of "multiculturalism" that will properly outrage conservative observers of higher education, most prominently, gay and lesbian studies, which have seen a prodigious growth, but I believe they are not required anywhere. One or another gay or lesbian studies course may qualify as a course that fulfills a requirement, but students can easily maneuver around them.

Matters are quite different in the state public school systems. There the teaching in the social sciences or social studies elementary or high school students that receive is at issue, because most of the curriculum in elementary and high school is fixed. Further, it is not formally set by teachers or even organized groups of teachers, but by political bodies at the state level.

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The public conflicts over the content of social studies and English in the elementary and high schools have mostly died down, but largely because multiculturalism has solidly established itself in teaching in social studies and English. There has been a recent flare-up in San Francisco where black members of the board of education demanded more required reading by minority writers. (What was most surprising to me was the news that Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* was one of the very few books high-school students were required to read, along with, more obviously, *Huckleberry Finn*, and a few others.)

The upshot of the conflicts over multiculturalism has been a marked rise in the amount of material in social studies and English on minorities and women. The effort to create National History Standards, which led to a great deal of conflict widely reported in the media, also demonstrates the hold of multiculturalism. Despite severe attacks, the National History Standards ended up strongly multicultural, in the attention given to formerly neglected parts of the world, particularly if they were the original homes of the leading American minorities, and in its emphasis on women and minorities. The curriculum in social studies and literature has been modified everywhere to give greater attention to the history and problems and literature of American minorities, in particular American Indians and African-Americans, and of women. Despite the broad reach of the term "multiculturalism," one does not yet see much in the curriculum on Hispanics and Asian-Americans; they play a much smaller role, whether in social studies or the literary side of the curriculum. Gay and lesbian studies are not yet in evidence at the elementary and high-school level. There was fierce opposition to the effort in New York City to introduce a few gay/lesbian pages in a lengthy multicultural guide for primary-school teachers, and the chancellor at the time, for this and other reasons, resigned.

What are the implications of the term "historical cultures," as a contrast to "multi-cultures." We are reminded that the cultures we are defending when we oppose multiculturalism have emerged as the expression of modern national states. These states—France, England, Germany, Italy, Spain, are typical examples—all appear to us, and are presented in their national educational systems, as unified and homogeneous, as unarguable and uncontroversial realities. New nations—far more numerous than these old nations—aspire to such a condition, and that is why they are so busy "constructing" national identities and cultures. But as we know, the characteristic successful nations of today—successful, that is, in being unarguably nations—have been constructed from many elements. In some cases, the construction goes back to the sixteenth century (England), in others only to the nineteenth century (Germany, Italy), and in all cases, the fault lines show, and the appearance of homogeneity is belied by a history of deep divisions among the

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regions and peoples that make up the nation. These divisions are evident to various degrees in contemporary culture and politics. The word "constructed" today is used for everything in order to deny, another current term, "essentialism," but in the case of national states "constructed" is indeed valid.

But there is today a second challenge to the old successful national states, a challenge posed by immigration and the creation of new minorities, often of a culture and religion quite distant from those that went into the original making of the nation. And this is where I find the challenge of the term "historical cultures" most interesting. What it suggests—which is indeed true—is that "multi-cultures," and in particular the newer ones created by postwar immigration, challenge the history and culture of the nation as it has been traditionally understood. What is that common history? It is that many elements have been successfully molded into a common and single nation, coherent, capable when necessary of unified action and great deeds. That is the common nature of the history taught in the successfully constructed nations, including ours in the United States.

That kind of history is told as a story with a central theme, in which difficulties are overcome and the nation becomes ever more successful, ever more perfect if you will. The advocates of multiculturalism want to tell a different story, one in which the "historical culture" loses its unity, subparts of it are given more respectful attention, and their coming together in harmony becomes questionable. For the United States, the "historical culture" tells the story of Pilgrims, Puritans, and colonial settlers overcoming the native Indians, unified against England in revolution, successfully overcoming the stain of slavery in the Civil War, growing in strength through industrialism and the inflow of great numbers of immigrants, all assimilating to the common American identity.

Multiculturalism challenges this "historic culture." A counter-history is proposed, one concentrating not on the English colonists and the world they made, but on those they pushed aside. The Indians—now called confusingly "Native Americans"—had a prior claim to their land that was met with total disdain, and they were subjected to genocide. The Hispanic colonizers of the Southwest, we are told, preceded the English of the Northeast, and they too were brutally set aside. (This year in New Mexico there is a celebration of the four-hundredth anniversary of the crossing of the Rio Grande and the claiming of New Mexico by Spanish colonists, and that was before—though not long before—the colonizing of Jamestown and the arrival of the Pilgrims.) In this new counter-history, the Civil War and the postwar amendments to the Constitution do not erase the stain of slavery, for Reconstruction was succeeded by massive state and popular discrimination that reduced blacks to an inferior caste. Further, in this counter-history the immigrants were arrogantly stripped of

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their language, their culture, their religions by an Anglo-American hegemonic culture. And the counter-history insists all that must be made good and must not be allowed to happen to the new immigrants. Their story too must now be told, particularly the story of the Mexicans and other Hispanics, and of the various Asian groups, who have their own history of state and popular discrimination. Most disturbingly, in this counter-history new candidates for inclusion keep on arising, under the ever more capacious banner of "multiculturalism," such as the gays and lesbians.

The problem created by the rise of multiculturalism is that the story of the building of the American nation will be told more as a series of failures than a series of successes. And that offends the majority of Americans who believe ardently in the first story and become indignant when educators and minority advocates want to replace it with the second.

Three chief fears are evident in the general alarm over multiculturalism. The first fear is of national disunity, as expressed in the most widely read critique of multiculturalism in the schools, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s *The Disuniting of America*. ("Fraying" and similar terms are also popular in the titles of books on multiculturalism. Todd Gitlin refers to *The Twilight of Common Dreams*—though his dreams refer more to the dream of a united working class than of the nation as a whole. John Miller titles his book *The Unmaking of Americans*. And so on.)

Does the multiculturalism I have described, the kind dominant in the schools, threaten national unity? I think most people will agree that certain kinds of disunity—the actual division of the United States into a number of states, as occurred in the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and as is feared in Canada—is simply not in the cards. While the civil wars in Lebanon or Bosnia are often referred to polemically as a warning of what multiculturalism may lead us to, few sober minds think this kind of extreme outcome is our problem. What new nation could possibly arise in and divide the United States? The political separation of the areas of dense Mexican-American population in the Southwest, for example, is proposed by no one in the Mexican-American community—it was once a dream of a few militants in the 1960s and 1970s—and is hardly thinkable, when one considers the degree to which these populations are integrated into the American economy, are active in American politics, become citizens, intermarry, and the like.

But short of that, how about the kind of disaffection which leads, for example, to mutiny in war, to distinctive ethnic and separatist parties, to the refusal to participate in patriotic ceremonies? One sees little or nothing of this. Disaffection there is. Multiculturalism directs the attention of youths of minority groups to their grievances rather than their successes, to the degree of their separation rather than the degree of their integration, but

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their disaffection generally takes the form of a demand for fuller inclusion. What are to be the terms of this inclusion, what is fair and just and equal, and what does a fuller inclusion require of majorities in the way of adaptation or change? There are fierce disagreements over the terms of inclusion in the debate on affirmative action. One fear raised as we reduce or eliminate affirmative action in some public colleges is that this will strengthen separatism and the sense of difference and exclusion among minorities. My guess is that the blacks who turn down Berkeley are not going to choose greater separation, as in black colleges, but will head for Stanford or Harvard or other private colleges that are freer in reaching out to minorities than the public universities, now prevented by popular proposition or court order from continuing racial and ethnic preference.

I do see an increase in rancor, which is both a cause of the new multicultural emphases and a result of them. But rancor is not easily avoided when all attention is concentrated on differences in income, education, wealth, power. It is our fate as a democratic society with equality as our agreed-on goal to suffer from rancor.

Another take on the issue is provided by the question, how much national unity do the developed nations of the West need? We are not engaged today in a major worldwide ideological conflict. The nations of Western Europe are drawing closer and closer together. Canada and Australia, which fought effectively in both world wars, tolerate a more substantial degree of multiculturalism in their education and other public policies than we do. Our own political language no longer features the heady nationalist political content that one could find in presidents like John F. Kennedy. International policies today seem to draw less on national ideological fervor than on sober calculation, in which the dominant factors are not the war between good and evil, between totalitarianism and the free world, but more prosaic matters, such as maintaining multiple sources for oil to keep down prices, preventing the conflicts of the Balkans from spreading, maintaining the health of the world economy, and the like. I do not see how multiculturalism plays any role in hobbling our current international and defence policies. Isolationism, which has nothing to do with multiculturalism, plays a much more important role.

A second fear aroused by multiculturalism is related to the fear of growing national disunity: what happens to the American national enterprise of assimilation, as we once called it, of integration, as we now call it? We fear that the great achievement of American life, the forming of a common nation out of many strands, will be denigrated and that assimilation of new elements will be delayed, or reversed. But our ideas in this regard, of how the different ethnic and racial elements of American life should come together, have not stood still and we no longer advocate or insist on the full

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assimilation that was demanded in the past. The critics of multiculturalism themselves no longer insist on full assimilation, which seems too disrespectful of the cultural differences that ethnic and racial groups may want to maintain. So the title of Peter Salins's critique of multiculturalism is *Assimilation American Style*. Salins tells us that the American pattern of assimilation doesn't demand the total abandonment of valued difference. It is a moderate request, not an absolute demand. I believe we are modifying—and the new multiculturalism is an example of this—our ideology of Americanization, another abandoned term, rather than its reality. Assimilation continues, regardless of both the decline of the ideology that once insisted on the total abandonment of difference, and the rise of a new ideology that now celebrates it. Our common economy, politics, and culture all lead to the same result, regardless of ideology, with different speeds and nuances from group to group. The old-style Americanization did not prevent the maintenance and transference of ethnic traits from one generation to another; and the new-style multiculturalism does not prevent the sharp reduction of difference from generation to generation.

That is the general pattern for immigrant groups, and I don't see substantial differences from this pattern among the newest immigrants. The real problem of integration or assimilation has always been raised by blacks, who are not an immigrant group at all, but are the group most separate from other Americans in residence, in intermarriage, in maintenance and even strengthening of dialectal differences. The old education ignored this reality; the new one makes a good deal of it. But it is not this recognition that leads to black difference; it is American history. Multiculturalism recognizes the difference. In doing so, there are distortions, errors, extravagances, all inevitable, alas, when one considers the complexity of the issues, the disputes over how to interpret them, the intellectual level of the makers of curricula and of the teachers who use them. We will have to live with a more various, a more "diverse," America, not so much more diverse in reality, but diverse in recognition, ideology, and celebration.

One of the more astonishing developments of the last few years in higher education has been the rise and universal use of the term "diversity," as something to be achieved, expanded, and celebrated. This term has become so popular because it evades having to justify the direct racial preference extended to "under-represented" groups, principally blacks, but also Mexican Americans and other Hispanics. One must ponder why, among three thousand college presidents, all celebrate and call for "diversity," and not one asks why it is certain kinds of diversity we reach for (ethnic, racial, "gender"), and not others (class, or diversity of political opinion). In American education, higher and lower, the course is towards more "diversity," whatever its impact on the shaping of a common people, however we squirm over its intellectual flaccidity.

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And a third fear: with multiculturalism, the truth is ignored, distorted, abandoned, and a false history, a false scale of values in judging literature, is established. Looking at the new syllabi, at for example the National History Standards, I find this fear extreme. Some odd things are happening, no doubt. In the National History Standards, students are expected to know almost as much about Nubia and Kush as about the great civilization of Egypt to the North, will know less about Greece and Rome, more about pre-Columbian civilizations and early East African cultures and civilizations about which we do not know very much. They will be expected to know something about the role of women in every epoch and every culture and civilization. We know why this is happening: the African-American students and the Latino students must be given something in which they can take pride, and women's studies have grown enormously. (For the Latinos, the pre-Columbian civilizations rather than the high civilization of Spain have been selected as the appropriate cultures of origin.)

But there are also other reasons why these balances change. Historians have learned more about these areas and their histories and they feel it is necessary to tell students about them. And multiculturalism itself increases the demand for more knowledge, and scholars, some in multicultural programs in colleges, respond. In English classes, the *Ivanhoes* and *Silas Marners* we once read are falling away, the Toni Morrisons and Amy Tans are more in evidence. That is certainly happening at the college and university level too, in part because of new ethnic and women's studies programs.

What attitude should we take to the reduction of the older emphasis on political and military history, the somewhat less old emphasis on economic history, and the new prominence given to ethnic and women's history and the role of non-European areas? Clearly everyone agrees that history and literature should change in response to changing tastes: the required course in English history in New England high schools a hundred years ago was replaced by a required course in European history, which has fallen in turn to "global studies," an amalgam of world geography and history and current problems. We will make different judgments as to what the gains and losses are in this process of curricular change. But we all agree that fixity is an illusion: the required course in "Western Civilization" that was under attack in Stanford is itself a product of the post-World War II years. This change should be policed, but the heaviest and steadiest pressure is for more about minorities and women. Harriet Tubman, despite her honorable but modest place in American history as I (and many others) would judge, becomes perhaps the best-known woman in American history. But note how much else has changed: Martin Luther King, Jr. has become the only American to be uniquely honored by a national holiday (even Washington and Lincoln must share a day). One must judge whether these

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changes are of the kind that demands combat without quarter. As Glenn Loury has said, we do not become a worse country if more students learn about the underground railway than the transcontinental railway.

Recently we have had some interesting books on the primacy of the West in world culture and the reasons for it: Jared Diamond's *Germs, Guns and Steel,* David Landes's *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, Thomas Sowell's *Conquests and Cultures*, all have interesting hypotheses to explain this primacy—climate, culture, geography. There is no question about the primacy. Science and technology, political systems and legal systems, music and art and literary forms, the organization of armies and the conduct of wars: in all spheres of culture, what was developed and elaborated in the West has spread around the whole world and dominates everywhere. The new multiculturalism reduces the significance of the West, may go on to denigrate it for colonialism, genocide, and domination. This offends me too. But I also cringe when we counter-attack by pointing out that African slavery was institutionalized among Africans, and that Arabs as well as Europeans exported and used African slaves. All true enough, but it is rather more important for our history that we were a slave society and its consequences I judge are far more significant for us than African slavery is for Arab countries.

I wonder about the consequences of exaggeration of the achievements of African and pre-Columbian civilizations. Concretely, it is hard to see those consequences. Do students become less committed to democracy if the role of the West in the spread of this style of government is reduced, and they are told that Asians and Africans and others also had some social forms akin to it? Do they become less committed to the usefulness of science, technology, and mathematics if they are told about obscure contributions by non-Europeans? After all, students learn or are expected to learn the same mathematics, science, and technology, to know how to read and write, to learn about our common political system, to respect the same medicine that all resort to in need. I wonder about the harm in it if teachers think this is one way to engage African-American and Latino students. The alienation of African-American students, in particular males, from formal education is evident and a problem to teachers, and I think one reason the educational establishment is so universally on the side of multiculturalism is that it thinks this is one way to address the problem.

But I also don't know that all this is useful or necessary. We have successful examples of the education of African-American students in which the emphasis is on Shakespeare rather than black literature, on algebra and calculus rather than on myths about Africa and pre-Columbian America. There are enormous lacunae in our understanding of what is happening. What is missing in the battles over multiculturalism is the study of actual

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schools, actual classrooms, actual teachers. What I do not know—and I believe no one knows—is whether the historical culture can still be taught effectively in schools (as in our inner cities), in which the majority of students are African American and Latino. If it can be, I would like to see it continued. It would not of course be continued in the form it took in the 1950s. It would tell a somewhat different story, incorporating the adaptations we have seen in recent decades, in which the roles of immigrants, minorities, women, have been expanded, but in which the story is still a positive one. It would be the story of a changing nation successfully incorporating new elements, but still one nation, in becoming if not in reality, in all aspects. I would adopt as the theme for this kind of education the title of Alan Wolfe's new book, *One Nation After All.*

If we go into our classrooms, do we find that the historical culture for our inner-city students is simply oppressive, unconnected with their lives, denied by their experience? That experience we know is also in part "constructed" and maybe these students have already been subjected to so much deadly criticism of the society from various sources that reach them, from the mass media to ideologists of all kinds, that they see their experience as one of denial and oppression rather than as one of opportunity. In other words, how disaffected are they with the "historical culture"? I think this is a much more important question for research than the conflicts over what should be done in the curriculum. Because what should be done has to be affected by who the students are, what they understand, how they see their experience.

I have seen evidence on both sides, in accounts of current schools and in some research, but we know remarkably little of how the traditional curricula of the "historic culture" or the newer multicultural curricula fare with students. By knowing more we will be in a better position to respond to the conflict between historical cultures and multi-cultures.

Peter Wood: We've run over our time so I think we'll have to limit ourselves to two questions. Anyone?

Speaker: I have a slight quibble with you when you say that science and mathematics, etc. have not been affected. Billions of dollars are spent in America every year and millions of people indulge in alternative medical procedures. Most, if not all, of them have irrational, non-Enlightenment-based theory as a substructure. In addition, things like acupuncture and other Chinese forms of treatment, Hindu forms of treatment, American Indian forms of treatment are popular. Now, I understand perfectly well what you mean by "multiculturalism" but this whole phenomenon has to be at least the effect of what multiculturalism does in other areas.

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Nathan Glazer: That's a fair point. I don't know to what extent that has actually penetrated medical education or, let's say health education in the lower schools, physiology, and so on. Possibly in some places it has. Whether it's made its way into the state curricula, I don't know.

Speaker: We have hospitals with departments for alternative care and part of the NIH has to do with alternative care. There are several medical schools that have additions to their curricula having to do with this. So it has penetrated, not outrageously but it's a splinter.

Donald Keaney: I'd like to raise a few brief objections. One of the speakers proposed the idea of eliminating segregation on college campuses by residential arrangements, by race and ethnicity, and also other aspects of that problem. Are we going to be living in a free society if this kind of coerced association is implemented?

Michael Meyers: I think you missed my point, which is that we do not have a free campus. We do not have an open campus and it is the college which is funding the separatism, which is organizing and arranging the separatism and which is contributing to the structuring of a racially identifiable campus, through pre-orientation programs, through funding, and through hiring. Now if students on their own, outside of college housing, want to room with whoever they want, that's their free association right. Once you get the college involved and you have sections of dormitories and wings of dormitories which the college knows are racially identifiable, which they have contributed to, and which have a resident assistant to help with the screening and the interviewing of residents, and when the college does everything it has in its power and resources to promote certain racially identifiable groups as opposed to others, who do not want racial separatism on the college campus, that is not free association. I'm not taking any "civil right" from a student. But there is cowardice on the part of the administration. They do this because they're buying racial peace, because it is popular and fashionable to have this kind of separatism and they want to avoid trouble. They don't want to bother or urge people to interact. They don't want to do those things. They don't want to reply to Leonard Jeffries. They have free speech rights. They just don't exercise them because of their cowardice, because of their racial paternalism, and I don't like it.

Nathan Glazer: I do think the speaker raises an interesting point and I'll give the Harvard case as an example. Harvard has never accepted theme houses. It doesn't possess even an ethnic cultural center.

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Michael Meyers: But Amherst and Cornell do.

Nathan Glazer: I know. Many others do. Harvard has a dozen undergraduate houses and some of those houses have higher concentrations of minorities than the average on the basis of what students select for themselves. In the first year they don't live in the undergraduate houses. They select a house. Some of the undergraduate houses may have had 40 percent minorities when the campus had under 30 percent, let us say, so Harvard introduced randomization, which eliminates that degree of preference, which may not have been racial. It may have been on all sorts of grounds, music and friendship, and so on. I thought that was a little excessive, so in a way one has to think of subtle issues in terms of college policy. That's all I wanted to say.

Peter Wood: Could I take one more question?

Speaker: I'd like to point out that Professor Glazer's comments about K-12 education in the United States as being more susceptible to multiculturalism because of the fixed curriculum have to be viewed within this context. While Gary Nash and Charlotte Crabtree and others may have created national standards, they are out there. They are relatively unannounced and uninvited and meaningless in the political decisions of local school boards that select these national standards. They have no applicability in the management of local school systems. At the state levels some boards of education and legislatures create curricula that may have multicultural implications within them. However, the transmission of those state interests or mandates is meaningless because the state bureaucracies lack the personnel and the will to implement them. The local politicians, assemblymen, and senators may put pressure on the governors, who will then pressure the local districts if they choose to. All in all, multiculturalism differs from locale to locale. Professor Glazer's need to find out what is really going on must be developed from the micro levels.

Michael Meyers: Part of the reason for that is that these programs and experimentation are driven by constituencies. The constituency in Newark is different from the constituency in Scarsdale, but the school board, the larger school board, it seems to me, has a central role which it is not playing. I've seen so much because systems differ. They say, "Those children are different from our children. If self-esteem studies or Afrocentrism is going to help them, well, let them try it." In New York you had an attempt at an African-American immersion, an Afrocentric school for boys in Brooklyn. There was no other community demanding that, but Brooklyn did and

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almost got it. On a wider scale, you do have a broader acceptance of bilingual education, which is a different branch of multiculturalism. It's very strong, widespread, and institutionalized, and you have the, new to us, way of treating new Americans, new immigrants. In New York we've even gotten to the point of setting up a special school for new Americans to reinforce their native language and culture. We didn't do these kinds of things before; we believed that to become an American you had to join the mainstream, and the schools were designed and structured to help you learn English and to learn the basics of common parlance and common communication and interaction with people. Now we're separating people on all kinds of grounds: race, sex, sexual identity, and national identity.

Peter Wood: I detect some restlessness among this extraordinarily patient audience so I think I'm going to call this session to a close. Edith, would you like to make a closing remark?

Edith Kurzweil: All I'd like to say is thank you to everybody and let's have lunch.

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EDITH KURZWEIL

Postscript

Webster's dictionary defines education as "the act of educating, teaching, or training; the art of developing and cultivating the various physical, intellectual, aesthetic, and moral faculties; instruction and discipline; tuition, nurture and erudition." Each of our participants spoke about one or more aspects of these aims, how and why we fall short of achieving them, and what could be done about them. They did get outside our current controversies as I had hoped and addressed others. A number of people invoked John Dewey. However, Dewey never clearly spelled out how his precept of education for democracy conflicts with his expectation of maintaining standards. Yet that was a large part of what we were discussing. Our questions had to do with the importance and role of traditions, the relation of high schools to universities, and the impact of societal values and institutions on what teachers and students end up taking for granted. In this respect, the contributions by the educators from abroad were enlightening. More than we, they related their educational goals and accomplishments to their entire cultures and did not focus on what goes on in the classroom.

When in the 1960s, in *Up the Down Staircase*, Bel Kaufman described the pandemonium and delinquency faced by teachers in inner-city high schools, we all were shocked. But we did not focus on these students' disdain for their teachers, nor on how close their behavior was to criminality—already before some of them were carrying knives and guns. Thus we did not fully realize that these conditions were deterring many truly bright young people from entering the profession. Chester Finn addressed this point when, among other things, he said that teachers now are being taught how to teach rather than what to teach, and to care for children rather than instruct them; that teaching the three "r's" and "mere facts" like geography, history, and science, has by now been dropped in favor of preparing students for life-long learning—whatever that may be. (I wonder whether this is what George Orwell had in mind when he said that a certain kind of nonsense can only be learned in school.) Rita Kramer stated that ever younger generations of teachers, brought up on such a thin diet, a sort of pabulum, later on become the professors in schools of education. Yes, some teachers may object to teaching science when they themselves have never had a course, and may realize that they cannot provide

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the proper stimulation that might encourage their more inquisitive pupils to escape from boredom and mischief into biology and mathematics. But under the present system they have no recourse.

John Dewey, in "Challenge of Democracy to Education," quotes "the patron saint of progressive education," Horace Mann, who said that "education is our only political safety; outside of this ark is the deluge." Since then the meaning and context of "progressive education," which the dictionary defines as "a set of reformist educational philosophies and methods that emphasize individual instruction," has been totally accepted. (I wondered whether Dewey would consider the mindless application of innovative fads as either "progressive" or "education"?) "I don't know what democracy means in detail," he confessed, before going on to ask, "What direction shall we give to the work of the school so that the richness and fullness of the democratic way of life in all its scope may be promoted?" He also stated that school administrators are to set "the direction of the educational enterprise . . . [which] entails special intellectual responsibilities and leadership."

Igor Webb made that point. He argued that only a university president with a broad vision is in the position to reform an institution of higher learning. Of course, American society, which undervalues education while assuming that everyone is entitled to a college degree, militates against strong leadership. But without raising admission requirements to universities and expectations of both students and faculty, he believes that high schools would not feel the need to live up to their responsibilities. Peter Wood's focus was on these high schools. He stated that we are short-changing students by not adequately preparing them for college. Now, colleges must teach what the high schools neglected, including preparation for citizenship. Instead, why not train those teenagers who want to become accountants, farmers, or ball players for these occupations, and let them take courses in the humanities and sciences later on, when they choose to? This would allow colleges to do their jobs. Both Webb and Wood, though coming to the issues from presumably opposite directions, found that their suggestions appear so outlandish only because politicians cannot afford to toy with teachers and their unions, or to introduce legislation that seemingly restricts the broadest possible access. (I believe that, theoretically, the public understands these problems, but gets muddled by the dogmatisms of interest groups and their critics.)

Bernard Avishai approached these issues from the perspective of potential employers. The need for industrial labor is passé, he said. Labor unions representing categories of workers are outdated in a period of rapid change, as ever more sophisticated computing and programming skills are needed and thus must be taught. But teaching institutions, and workers,

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perceive this change as caused by business rather than by the inventions that have rendered the old forms of production obsolete. Certainly, people will have to be literate to be employable. Whether this will happen in existing educational institutions or in alternative ones set up by corporations is up for grabs. In any event, Avishai maintained that we can neither afford anti-business attitudes nor tax cuts targeted to education; that business leaders and schools will have to cooperate in order to produce a competitive work force—using every means at their disposal, including television and on-line services. During Dewey's lifetime, these problems still were in the future, but the need of education for democracy remains. Maybe more so, Avishai concluded, when individuals unable to adjust nevertheless will have to be taken care of.

Other panelists, rather than focusing on how to turn around the obvious slide in quality within our educational institutions, recounted what had gone on in the past and how we might get back to it, reclaim it. Vann Woodward elaborated on the deterioration of standards in history—which he illustrated by citing the steep decline in numbers of majors and degrees granted, of intellectual content—and blamed this on the substitution by postmodernism, poststructuralism, and other fashionable imports. He did not actually say that those who don't know their history are bound to relive it, but by recalling that both Nazism and Communism had started out as utopias, he certainly brought home the need of linking up with the past, and the poverty of the "cultural studies" that have replaced the teaching of history.

Steven Marcus spoke more generally of the humanities, by retracing their role in American education and showing how and why we no longer assume that the central, or should I say unconscious, themes and problems of society have to be addressed. In recent years, these concerns were replaced by focusing on the realities of war, race, poverty, sex, gender, and styles of life, which ended up being played out on our campuses. Marcus talked of the formation of "a renovated cultural populism," and the reaction against it. He asked us to be flexible, to address the issues one by one, and to remain suspicious of cultural projects with overtly political purposes. Jerry Martin told us that he spends his time trying to undo such projects. He receives support from university alumni in order to reinstitute the teaching of history and the humanities, mostly by means of a core curriculum—which is meant to allow students to learn in college what older generations, and students in most other Western nations, have been learning in high school: the classics, philosophy, foreign languages, and history.

In the most erudite manner, Jon Westling demonstrated that to be educated used to mean having the art of rhetoric at one's fingertips. "Oratory has petrified like a log from a Carboniferous swamp," he declared

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and went on to give examples. For instance, students applying to Boston University in 1870 were expected to be conversant with Milton, Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Homer; had to take exams in Latin, Greek, and mathematics, as well as in English literature and history. (Do today's students know all that upon graduation, I wondered.) During their college careers, rhetorical exercises and elocution were required subjects. A speaker "was carried away by his passions and forgets these artificial and studied formulae, as he becomes truly eloquent." Westling does not expect us to retrieve these days, or to turn many students into orators. But to recall this past is to know what has been lost, chipped away unobtrusively, little by little. He ended up saying that universities must restore rhetoric—as the skill that joins language to thought.

Robert Brustein demonstrated how arts education might help accomplish that task. He decried its purposeful neglect by administrators who perceive poetry, theater, and music as frills; and by faculty as taking resources away from serious work—especially at an (elite) institution such as Harvard. In its history, which Brustein outlined, neither playwriting, drawing, painting, nor photography, have been taught as part of the regular curriculum, apparently because "Harvard prefers its scholars to be gentlemen and its arts recreational." Thereby, music, dance, and painting largely are relegated to clubs, orchestras, and choruses. The American Repertory Theater, the only permanent arts organization on campus, does not offer advanced degrees. And faculty has been pressuring it to include such things as "cultural context, politics, cultural differences, and global technology" in theater courses. According to Brustein, this is indicative of the continuing tension between the humanist and the artist, notwithstanding the fact that poets, novelists, and dramatists are the grist of humanistic endeavors.

When Rita Kramer criticized our unique institutionalization of liberalism over the past sixty years, she showed that we have made a caricature of it. After all, Dewey, after noting liberalism's inner breach, found that "in the United States [it] has been identified largely with the idea of the use of governmental agencies to remedy evils from which the less-fortunate classes suffer." School leaders, he went on, either must conform to the pressures of school boards, politicians, and taxpayers, or take the infinitely harder road that focuses on the growth of students which, in turn, will be part of the larger development of society. Some commentators from the audience spoke of their own ways of circumventing the politicians by means of reform in niches, international bachelor's degrees, and other ruses. But what about the 90 to 95 percent of students in America, a large majority, who are left out, countered Finn.

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By invoking Dewey, of course, we are able to hold on to our innate liberalism, and to support programs that promise to render all citizens literate and numerate. But I doubt that Dewey would condone spending "billions of dollars of taxpayers' money to overtrain and undereducate the teachers who now [are the only ones that] qualify for credentialing." In liberal societies, however, government, by its very nature, is the major source of funding that ensures its citizens equal access to education. By hearing how this is happening elsewhere, we were brought face to face with the extent to which national traditions of civil society, and of political culture, permeate all school systems—from kindergarten to high school and from professional schools to the universities. This comparison itself, some participants commented informally, might counteract the navel-gazing we are accustomed to when trying to extricate ourselves from the nearly insuperable predicaments we've gotten stuck in. Is it democratic for our government to fund private charter schools, elementary schools sponsored by religious organizations, and specialized education initiatives? By aiming for equality of conditions rather than opportunities, and settling for the lowest common denominator, can we remain competitive within the Western world? Why are we the only country whose students' performance gets further behind—compared to the rest of the world—the longer they remain in school? Panelists and discussants offered advice; a few saw faint glimmers of light at the end of the proverbial tunnel, encouraged either by initiatives in a few niches, or by a few successful charter schools; others held on to their dreams, hoping that these might be fulfilled by pushing the government.

Among the latter was Helga Deppe-Wolfinger from Germany. There, professors are hired and paid by state governments, and universities are administered by a lean bureaucracy and a large committee of deans. In Frankfurt, 95 percent of about six hundred professors are tenured, and are supported by over one thousand assistants and thirteen hundred staff persons. Professors are fairly free to teach what they choose, to students (80 percent are working) who pay no fees, take no entrance exams, and are allowed to enroll in courses that interest them. Standards remain high (as they did in the 1970s when open admission suddenly crammed classrooms) not least due to rigorous high school standards. However, too many students stay on for too many years. Deppe-Wolfinger blamed the crisis in her university (and in other ones) on recent, draconic cuts in spending by the state, and charged current government policies that favor neo-liberal patterns of private entrepreneurship for increasing poverty and unemployment, thereby losing the university's humane mission. "Shades of our 1960s," commented a participant. True, I must add, but fueled by the unconscious fear of left-leaning Germans that impoverishment, once

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again, might make possible a new version of the Nazi past; and by the tradition of letting politics solve all problems.

Kurt Scholz's teachers in the Vienna school system, K-12, also are employed by the state. Both he and Agnès van Zanten, a sociologist from Paris, began by stating that school systems across countries can no more be compared than societies, since they are related to different parliamentary, political, and party systems, have variable traditions and values, and depend on entrenched administrations of power. In all of Austria, for instance, teachers in public and private schools are paid by the government, and on the same scale throughout the country; their salaries are higher than those of other civil servants and teachers' training is extremely rigorous. Foreign visitors envy Austria's schools for a number of reasons: immigrants "melt" as much as they did in the Kaiserreich; there are neither drugs nor criminality; school management is lean; and public schools compete favorably with private ones. This may well be due to a low teacher-pupil ratio, and to an educational philosophy that envisions the schools as the foundation of democratic society, which means, also, that government cost-cutting spares education. Children are held to standards; they must pass written and oral exams; and they know that homework and performance count. Scholz, who believes in progressive education, nevertheless found that children do best in a structured environment, and that high expectations lead to high levels of achievement. Consequently, entrance exams for university are superfluous.

In France as well, the so-called wheat is separated from the chaff in every grade, insofar as students who do not master requirements are held back, though they may take a make-up exam or two at the end of the summer. By the time they finish high school it is assumed that they're ready for university. Agnès van Zanten concentrated on the current impact of immigrants which, among other things, she linked to the significance of being French. This has been a central issue since the 1930s, when Eastern and German Jews sought refuge in France. She quoted statistics showing that "already settled" immigrants contributed to the backlash by the Right, to the large vote for Le Pen. Other studies found that immigrant children's achievements compare favorably with those by French ones in the lower grades. But they often do not go on to university, mostly because their families need them, or expect them to earn money.

David Pryce-Jones reminded us that England's colonial ties had encouraged immigration and emigration, but that the end of empire created new circumstances. The weakened nation-state, he went on, lost the power to enforce the necessary compromises protecting all citizens, just as masses of immigrants were arriving. Pryce-Jones spelled out the many reasons that have led newer immigrants to pursue separatist rather than

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assimilationist goals, to form organizations defending particular identities, tribalism, separatism, and Islamic fundamentalism—just as the end of empire led the British to question their own identity. He asked whether the British version of multiculturalism helps integrate minorities, or hinders integration by keeping them within their own boundaries; and whether the separation into groups is divisive to the society, even though younger generations of immigrants no longer are connected to their country of origin. In England, stated Pryce-Jones, black power is a spent force, but Islamic fundamentalism, which is "incapable of tolerating the existence of others as others," is thriving. He perceived the European Union as yet another danger: its emphasis on doing away with nation states and territoriality (as the fomentors of war) fosters the identification of individuals with their tribal origins, such as Basques, Corsicans, the IRA, Flemings, northern Italians, and so on. As in the case of the former Yugoslavia, their claims may lead to local wars, to acting on prejudices that for a long time had been forgotten. Under these circumstances, will Britons who themselves feel marginalized create yet another backlash? (This situation, I kept thinking, makes it even more necessary to provide civic and humanistic education for everyone.)

Michael Meyers addressed racial prejudice in America. He pleaded for more and better education, so that all citizens will learn to reason. He cited problems resulting from the implementation of affirmative action on American college campuses, where such things as black studies, black dorms, black karate, minority student affairs, etc. have instituted ghettoization rather than furthered the equality they were meant to. And he asked us to dismantle "the racial idiocy of our society," to do away with exclusionary and unequal rules. Nathan Glazer, with his customary moderation, threw water on the flames by recounting the history and use of the varieties of multiculturalism, and their links to postmodern theories and fads. He downplayed their impact on the humanities and social sciences. Comparing required courses in the past and the present, he found that they had not changed very much, and that students never were forced to register for courses in such areas as womens' studies, and gay and lesbian studies. He too spoke of the challenge posed by immigration, and, with the help of examples, contrasted "historical cultures" to newly "constructed" ones—which now demand inclusion. That brought us back, once again, to where we had started: at what students ought to know—as members of their societies, as informed citizens, as optimally functioning adults.

"You learn for yourself," my mother used to say while I was growing up, "What you know no one can take away." But what about the students who don't care for abstract knowledge, who prefer to work with their hands, to become plumbers, or disc jockeys, or owners of small stores? I

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have had some of them in my classes and have thought that they might be better off in a trade school, or an adequate high school. (In Austria, for instance, early streaming is the norm, and transferring to university later on is facilitated.) This gets us back to the assumption that in our democracy every kid deserves a college education. I was struck by the mindlessness of this notion, when the nice kid who fixed the windshield wiper of my car told me how much he loves his work and then asked me whether at my university they had advanced courses for car mechanics. This is not what John Dewey had in mind when he assumed that an educational alliance of teachers and workers would be salutary. Neither did he foresee our "post-modern" dilemmas, or how, due to the many meanings and missions of education, his ideas might be misinterpreted or misapplied.

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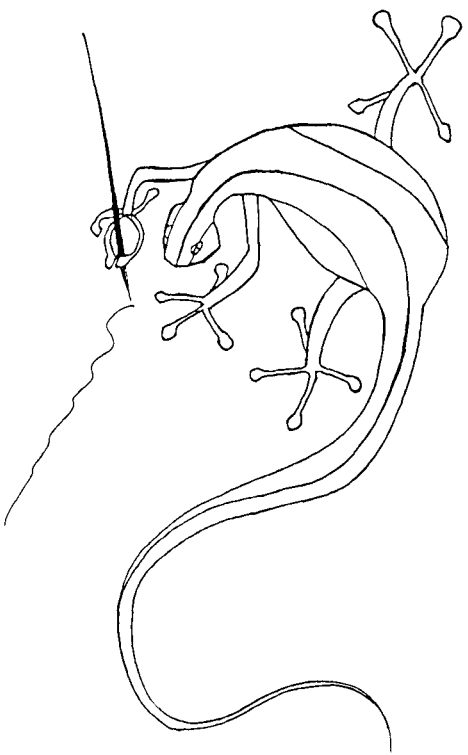

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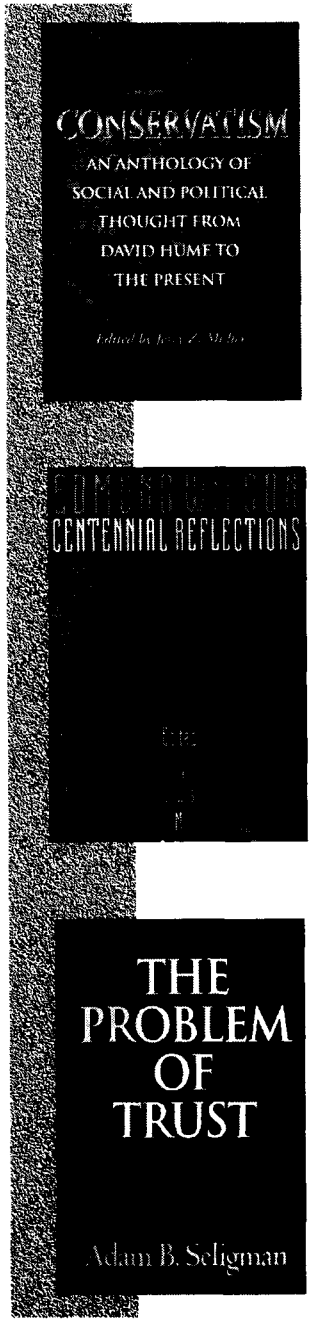

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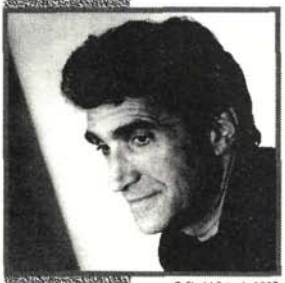

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